

Dr. ANNIE BESANT AND HER CONTRIBUTIONS
TO SOCIETY AND POLITICS 1893 -1933

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BY
ANTHONY CHAGANTI




DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD 500 046
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD - 500 046.

This is to certify that, I, Anthony Chaganti, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under Ph.D. ordinances of the University of Hyderabad.


I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for award of any research degree to any other University.


Date: 5.12.1996.


Research) Scholar


Supervisor

(Dr.K.S.S. Seshan)


Head,
Dept. of History,
School of Social Sciences,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad.


Dean,
School of Social Sciences,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad.

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The mid 19th century Europe was affected with a shadow of international conflicts. The period was marked by various wars that caused destruction of life and property. The years between 1815 and 1854 were an era of revolutions. Since 1854 the period was remarkable for the large scale struggle in Europe. It was followed by a series of conflicts resulting in as many as six important wars in which major powers took part. There was the Crimean War between 1854 and 1856 involving Britain, France, Russia and Turkey. The Franco-Austrian war of 1859 involving France and Austria. There were also the Danish war of 1864, waged by Prussia and Austria against Denmark, the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and the Russo-Turkish war between 1877 and 1878 which almost turned into a general European conflict.

The later part of 19th century was dominated by the unification of Germany during the corresponding period. This was a triumph for nationalism as a force, which was growing in strength in the 19th century. But this nationalism was marked by bitter hostility and war. The extreme nationalism led to a primitive tribalism. It gave suspicions, revengefulness, aggressiveness and cruelty among the nations. In the name of nationalism and political unification in Germany, every kind of atrocity was committed. Militarism occupied pride of place. Moral considerations were given a go by. The activities of leaders like Otto Von Bismarck made every right thinking people all over Europe wonder

weather the policy of 'Blood and Iron' alone or even the policy of 'coal and steel' for economic reconstruction would take humanity to greater heights.

The growth of nationalism cannot be explained in terms of propaganda by an intellectual elite. However, only a complex series of suffering frustrations, hopes and aspirations could account for the growth of nationalism among the whole classes of people such as aristocracy of Poland, the gentry of Hungary, the bourgeoisie of Germany and the peasantry of Ireland.¹

As a result of this, Western Europe saw the revival of international feeling of organisations in commercial, labour and scientific fields. This period showed that the task to be carried out by humanity was in laying of the foundation of brotherhood. The emergence of such a sense of brotherhood may be looked upon as the first hopeful sign of the dawning of a new age. The new age is being born with the idea of the brotherhood of men and nations for universal attention. To promote the universal brotherhood, to educate the value of responsibility and to impart humanitarian outlook, the Theosophical Society emerged in New York in 1875.

¹ Irene Collins: *The Age of Progress* (A survey of European History (1789-1870) London, 1978, pp.316-317.

Annie Besant and her early career:

Among the numerous staunch nationalists, who thought and worked for the awakening of India, who strived hard for the revival of Indian Culture and who strongly pleaded for the political upliftment of the Indians, and for their rights, and liberties, the name of Dr. Annie Besant figures like a beacon of light. She worked for human freedom and sympathy for the low and down-trodden. She toiled for the regeneration of the country and rendered relentless service for the educational, social and political progress of India's teeming millions.

Annie Wood as she was known, till her marriage, was born on 1st October 1847 in London. Annie Besant was second of three children of whom she was the only girl.² Her father, William Page Wood, was of an English Devonshire family, born at Galway in Ireland. He served as an appointee in the government of the city of London. He was an intellectual and well educated, a good mathematician, a fine classical scholar, much more inclined to philosophy, science and a master of French, Italian, German, Spanish and Portuguese, with a smattering of Hebrew and Gaelic. He was the treasure of ancient and modern literature. He died in 1852 when little Annie was five years old.³

- 2 Dr. Annie Besant born was at 5.39pm on 1st October 1847 in London. Her father was William Page Wood and mother Emily Morris. She had one elder brother called Henry and younger brother, Alfred, who died in infancy.

See for details: Annie. *Besant, Autobiography* TPH, Adyar, 1983, p.1 and also see, *A Study History of Theosophy and Theosophical Society*, (Study Course) Wheaton, Illinois, USA, n.d. p.47.

- 3 Dr. Besant wrote her early memories in her Autobiography, that "... I was lifted on to the bed to say good-bye to dear papa ... on the

Besant's mother, Emily Moris, was a pure Irish. Besant loved the Irish and their ways. She has remarked that "the Irish tongue is musical in my ear, and the nature dear to my heart".⁴ One of her aunts, she recounts, was very proud of her family tree and claimed descent from 'Seven Kings of France'. This family descent, gave a particular training in reticence and the pride of honour which was strange preparation for strong public life to Annie Besant.

Annie Besant idolised her mother after the death of her father. The love, devotion and admiration which she felt for her mother and the closeness of their association in the years which followed, seems to have had a tremendous influence on her character. She says of her mother:

The tenderest, sweetest, proudest, noblest and purest woman I have ever known. I have never met a woman more selflessly devoted those she loved, more passionately contemptuous of all that was mean and base more keenly sensitive on every question of honour, more iron in will. She never allowed a trouble of any kind to touch me, and cared only that all the worries should fall on her and joys on me.. No hand but hers must dress my hair, which loosed, fell in devise curly masses nearly to my knees: no hand but hers must fasten dresses and deck with flowers. So guarded and shielded had been my childhood and youth from every touch of pain. . . and made my girlhood sunny as dreamland, who guarded me until my marriage.⁵

day before his death. As he made me promise always to be a very good girl to darling mummy'. I remember - a doll given to me on my birth day three days before. 'He' died on the following day on 5th October, 1852."

See for details: Annie Besant, *An Autobiography*, (3rd edition,) Theosophical Publishing House, (hereafter TPH), Adyar, 1983, p. 10.

⁴ Ibid. P.3.

⁵ W.T.Stead, *Annie Besant*, (A character sketch-1891) TPH, Adyar, 1946 p. 9.

From the beginning, the primary importance of maintaining honour at any cost of pain was instilled in the child. Besant says that the result was that all her life, she had a 'proud and passionate horror' of merited disgrace, but could remain resolute and outwardly calm in the face of un-merited criticism in the knowledge that 'I am not what you think me, and your verdict does not change me'.⁶

The childhood of Annie Besant was a period of struggle and anxiety on the part of her mother on account of financial troubles. Mrs. Wood desired that her eldest son Henry should be educated in Harrows. That she was able to do this was largely by the kind support of Dr. Vaughan, who was then Headmaster of Harrow. He allowed her to reside in his house by that she agreed to take and inspect the studies of the Harrow boys. By that means, she was able not only to keep herself, but to find means for the education of her son.

Little Annie was thus brought up in a place of idyllic joy at Harrow. She was a good cricketer among the boys and climber as any of them. She was so passionately devoted to her mother, that when being teased once about her clinging affection, "I will tie you to my apron with a string"....then, Annie replied... 'Oh mamma darling, do let it be in a

⁶ *History of Theosophy and Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.62.

knot⁷. Dr.Besant revelled in the freedom and beauty of spacious garden and its bees and flowers and its far extended outlook over one of the loveliest of English land scapes.

There was not a tree there that I did not climb, and one, a wide spreading portugal laurel, was my private country-house. I had there my bedroom and my sitting-rooms, my study and my larder. The larder was supplied by the fruit trees, from which I was free to pick as I would, and in the study I would sit for hours with some favourite book- Milton's paradise lost, the chief favourite of all..⁸

However, she was brought up in a spirit in accordance with the traditional pattern. The task of looking after Annie Besant and her education was taken over by Miss.Marryat, a sister of the famous novelist Captain Marryat. Miss.Marryat was a born teacher, who tutored in her home several children. She pioneered to the training of children on the basis of the least pain and enjoyment to themselves. As Miss. Marryat seems to have been far ahead of her time in educational idea, using methods which developed a love of knowledge in the children under care. This system analogous to that evolved by Madamme Montessori, who later on co-operated with Annie Besant in the educational sphere.⁹

Annie had a regular course of education under the guidance of Miss.Marryat. She had taken a beautiful place, Fernhill and started a Sunday school for Bible classes there. Miss.Marryat was a strict Evengelial; and this influence, together with Bible classes, stories of

⁷ Annie Besant, *Autobiography*, Op.Cit., p.22.

⁸ Annie Besant, *Autobiography*, Op.Cit., p.20.

⁹ C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, *Annie Besant*, New Delhi, 1963, p.10.

the Christian martyrs, and prayer meetings, moved Annie Wood to the most solemn piety. This was later mellowed by her experience abroad, where the effect of the beauty of the Cathedrals, the ceremonial and especially her own religion, for her into a warmer, more brilliant and deeply passionate experience.

This was a time of pervasive materialism in England. It was not the philosophic materialism of the few but the religious materialism of the many. Annie's education was based on the religious side and her favourite books were *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Milton's Paradise Lost*.¹⁰ Annie had education in music and she was perfected in French and German after a short period of stay in Europe, when she was fourteen years old.

After Annie had finished her education under Miss.Marryat, three years were spent in the study of the early Christian Church and in teaching at a mission. To serve through the church became her increasing desire. It was not strange, that looked upon the clergy as 'the special messengers and chosen servants of the Lord'.

In 1866, Annie Wood was introduced to a clergyman Rev.Frank Besant, a young Cambridge Don. However, when she met Frank Besant and began to encounter many doubts, which she discovered, apparently for the first in her life, that there were discrepancies in the Evangelical life. Her inner life was still filled with passionate religious fervour and a philosophy which she characterised as really the human passion of love

¹⁰ C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., p. 10.

transferred to an ideal. Annie became engaged to Reverend Frank Besant of Cambridge. She looked forward to her marriage as the beginning of a 'sacred office' in which she would share the duties of his work and the nearness to holy things. But not because, she loved him particularly, or had even the faintest conception of what marriage entailed. She idealised the clergyman as a special messenger and servant of the Cod. The position of Clergyman's wife, she remarks, seems second only to that of a nun, and its attractiveness had very little to do with the personality of the particular clergyman who is selected to discharge the sacred functions.¹¹

There had been no place for young girl's dreams of love in a life devoted to serious study, nor had she been permitted to read novels or even the great love stories of literature, Her love nature revolved around her idea of a personal saviour. She says:

.....I longed to spend my time in worshipping Jesus, and was, as far as my inner life was concerned, absorbed in that passionate love of the Saviour which among emotional Catholics really is the human passion of love transferred to an ideal-for women to Jesus, for men to the Virgin Mary¹²

Of the personal aspects of married life, she seems to be completely ignorant.

Since Annie's fifth year, there had been in the family, no husband and father around whom the home life of those Victorian times otherwise

¹¹ W.T. Stead, *Annie Besant* Op.Cit., p.25.

¹² Annie Besant *Autobiography*, Op.Cit., p.49.

would have centered to teach its lessons of adaptation. No details of household, or of providing and preparing her wardrobe, was ever allowed to touch her. Her mother saw to it that she concerned herself solely with her studies and music. She says, that.....

My dreamy life..... in which I had been guarded from all pain, shielded from all anxiety, kept innocent on all questions of sex, was no preparation for married existence and left me defenseless to face a rude awakening.¹³

It is a coincidence that her first doubt of the veracity of the story of the Christ should have arisen shortly before her marriage to a clergyman. She had compiled from the four Gospels a comparative history of the events occurring in the week before the crucifixion and discovered some discrepancies in the accounts. It led to a rude shock to one accustomed to consider the Bible infallible. However, the doubt was quickly 'struck-down' as the greatest sin. But it was to raise its head again to add strength to other doubts in later days.

The awakening of her character made her challenge several of the Christian dogmas. It was not the challenge of unfaith, but rather of a highly spiritual nature that desired intensely not only to believe, but also to understand. The impossibility of marking logic out of the Christian traditions made her leave the church and become a free-thinker.

Annie became engaged to Frank Besant when she was in her nineteenth year. A few weeks later, she felt that she drifted into an engagement with a man that she did not pretend to love. She tried to break the

¹³ Ibid. p.54.

engagement but her mother dissuaded her and so she married Frank Besant, when she was twenty years of age in December 1867. And to this marriage were born two children to them, a son in January 1869 named Digby¹⁴ and a daughter in August 1870 named Mabel.

There were the first irreconcilable differences between the husband and wife. Frank Besant was with high ideas of a husband's authority and wife submission, easily angered and was difficult to appease. Whereas, she was accustomed to freedom, ignorant and indifferent to household details, impulsive, hot-tempered and proud as Lucifer.¹⁵

As a result, she waged mental conflicts. To relieve her solitude, she turned to write short stories for the Family *Herald* and also wrote a book on *The Lives of the Black Letter Saints*.¹⁶ She had earned thirty shillings for the first time which gave her delightful sense of independence. But,

¹⁴ Digby Besant later became the owner of Theosophical Publishing House in London. For many years he was prominent in Insurance World of London. He served as President of Life Insurance Society (1906-1933), almost the same period in which his venerable mother, Besant was President of Theosophical Society. He has served on national insurance commissions and was president of the Institute of Actuaries. He wrote a book on The Besant Pedigree and on actuarial subjects.

Mrs. Mabel-Besant Scott has married Ernest Scott, a journalist with whom she conducted a Theosophical Journal in Australia. Later she worked at Adyar for some years till 1935. She also worked in the office of Co-Masonic Order in England.

¹⁵ Annie Besant, *Autobiography*, Op.Cit., p.64.

¹⁶ *A History of the Theosophy and Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.64.

she learned that a wife's earnings belongs to her husband under English Law. However, this early writings did provide a meanse to release and relieved somewhat the strain, bitterness and incompatibility.

At a time when Annie Besant already had a confused and troubled life, she had to face also the problem of illness of her children. In 1871 the two children got whooping cough and she states that she fought death for her children. There began for Annie Besant the great struggle which was to lead her from Christianity to Atheism. It was a struggle which was to last more than three years. The dreadful torture to which her baby had been subjected raised a question of the quality of mercy of God, who could inflict such pain on an innocent child, in addition to the purposeless suffering imposed on the child. She had been visiting the poor a good deal and had marked the patient suffering of their lives. Her idolised mother had been defrauded by a lawyer she had trusted and was plunged into debt by his non-payment of the sums that should have passed through his hands to others. And her own bright life had been enshrouded by pain and degraded and bereft of dignity.

It was important and revelent to her character and temperament that Besant's disbelief first concerned itself with God and Christ in their relation to a suffering world. She read avidly the great religious scholars, talked with the eminent clergy of the day in an effort to understand and resolve the difficulties of belief. She read the Eastern teachings about the Avataras and discovered that Jesus Christ was not unique as an incarnation of Deity. She realised that if she challenged the position of Christ, she must give up Christianity. Thus she came to the decision that she could no longer attend communion. Finally Frank Besant

gave an ultimatum in his professional standing that she must attend communion or be excluded from home. As between hypocrisy and expulsion, there was only one choice for her. Her tradition of honour and truth at any cost of pain and despite her beloved mother's inability to understand the importance of the issue to her, she took her stand on the side of principle. She obtained a legal separation from her husband in 1873, and was given custody of her daughter and a little amount as monthly allowance.

This step led to various changes in thought and conviction and were typical of the progress of Annie Besant's life during the next eighteen years. She took a firm and courageous stand wherever principle was concerned, at the cost of heartbreak, and under the necessity of giving pain to friends and loved ones who could not understand her changed point of view. She moved constantly towards the ever-widening horizon of the one truth. She relentlessly worked for the truth, which helps the suffering humanity for better solutions and she investigated to new concepts and new methods.

After leaving her husband she became governess, cook and nurse in the home of a vicar in Folkstone. This provided a home and food for herself and her little girl, and made possible the accumulation of her monthly allowance to purchase furniture for a home which she planned to establish for her mother, herself and her daughter. However, this dream was not realised, as her mother died in the following spring of 1874. Her mother's death was a deep sorrow to Annie Besant and a big personal loss.

Annie Besant then turned her whole attention to study and writing. She had met Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Scott, who issued each month a series of

pamphlets, based on heretical in thought but cultural in tone. For them, she wrote, *Atonement, Eternal Torture, Natural and Revealed Religion* and on similar subjects. These were the days of financial struggle, but happy days nevertheless, in which she revelled in her intellectual freedom and joy in her growing child.

Every vestige of her old faith had been discarded, except the belief in God. She began to question the very existence of God, studying every argument she could find for and against the idea. In her search, she ran across a copy of the *National Reformer* an atheistic journal published by Charles Bradlaugh, from which she learned for the first time that there actually was an organisation devoted to the propagation of Free thought by the National Secular Society. She at once applied for membership.¹⁷

Dr. Annie Besant joined the Free Thought Society in 1874. She came to be acquainted with the work of Charles Bradlaugh in 1867. As Besant stated that from the first meeting of it in the Hall of Science dated a friendship that lasted unbroken till death severed the earthly bond which to her, stretched through death's gateway and linked them together. Bradlaugh and she became intimate friends.¹⁸

¹⁷ Dr. Annie Besant bought a copy of the *National Reformer* in a shop. From it she learned that the National Secular Society was an organisation for the propagation of Free Thought. She wrote to Mr. Charles Braudlaugh who accepted her as a member. She went to hear him for the first time at the Hall of Science on 2nd August 1874.

See for details: W.T. Stead, *Annie Besant* Op.Cit., P.61.

¹⁸ C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P.17.

The National Secular Society was founded in 1874. Charles Bradlaugh was the President and Dr. Besant was the Vice-President of the Society. She was also the Co-editor of the *National Reformer* which was the main instrument for propaganda of 'Free Thought' from National Secular Society. She wrote many articles, books and pamphlets on politics and free thought during 1874-'88. From 1875, Dr. Besant started her career as lecturer on Free thought and undertook lecture tours.

Dr. Besant began to speak in public on various subjects. It was witnessed with her first lecture on The Political Status of Women in 1874. She began to prepare herself as a speaker, and from the platform as well as in her writings during the next ten years, until 1884. She taught the materialist philosophy of the importance of human happiness in this world. She opposed orthodox idea of assessing values predicted on some mythical state after the death, that a lofty system of ethics was more important than a logical intellectual conception of God. The importance of morals based on human welfare and nobility of life and of casting away old standards of right conduct which were based on authority.

During these years, Dr. Besant used the power of her pen and tongue to support Charles Bradlaugh's term after term in his campaigns for election to parliament, and then for his right to take his seat which was contested each time because of his atheism.

It was during these years also that they fought together for the right to publish and distribute the *knowlton pamphlet*. This pamphlet which offered a remedy for the dilemma in which the poor found themselves. It advocated voluntary limitation of the family and gave information of methods of birth control.

This was a long and bitter fight, during which both of them suffered from the imputation of the basest motives. In the mean time Dr. Besant herself wrote another pamphlet on 'The Law of Population', which set forth the terrible distress and degradation entailed by overcrowding and lack of necessities of life. She also helped to organise at the same time the Malthusian League for the purpose of getting these ideas before the poor.

Mrs. Besant resigned her office of Vice-President in the National Secular Society during the trouble over the *knowlton pamphlet*. She had never been interested in politics as such but in 1884 she became interested in Socialism. She said that "its splendid ideals appealed to her heart, while its economic soundness convinced her head". However, the Socialists were hotly antagonistic to the radical individualists of the time, and especially to Mr. Bradlaugh who was such a power among the radicals.

Mrs. Besant joined the Fabian Society in 1885. This group was least hostile to Mr. Bradlaugh of all the Socialist groups. But, while the deep friendship between the two continued, this step meant that it would not be fair to him for her to continue her work as co-editor of the *National Reformer* and so she resigned the post.

Dr. Besant's crusading spirit and friendship with the renowned writer and socialist thinker Geroge Bernard Shaw¹⁹ helped her to join the Fabian Society.²⁰ She was one of its earliest members. Dr. Besant worked as a speaker and lecturer on behalf of her colleagues like Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw. Mrs. and Miss. Bland and Graham Wallas. She, along with others spread her ideas through the lectures on social justice, upliftment of economic condition and political reform. The Fabians included social reformers, lead by Sydney and Beatrice Webb and Pathic Lawrence who was later to head the British Cabinet Mission to India in 1946, that paved the way for Indian Independence. The Fabians sought to create public opinion to compel the state to take effective measures to better the lot of the poor and deprived people of Britain and of the British colonies. To-day the London working class is so largely socialistic because of the contribution of Fabian Society.

¹⁹ *George Bernard Shaw*: (1856-1950) The Famous British playwright, Critic, essayist and Social Reformer. He has been called the greatest dramatist writing in English after Shakespeare and the greatest British satarist after Jonathan Swift. His drama criticism influenced the trend of 20th century play writing. In 1925, Shaw was awarded the 'Noble Prize' for literature. He attacked capitalism, Militarism, hypocrisy and the artificiality of moral and social conventions. He supported vegetarianism and was an ardent anti-vivisectionist. He became interested in socialism and he joined Fabian Society in 1884.

²⁰ *Fabian Society*: An organisation founded in 1883, to promote social reform through socialism. The society was originally the vehicle of a middle class group of intellectuals, on the radical wing of British politics. It was named after the Roman General Fabious Contactor. The Fabians believed that socialism should come not by revolution but gradually through education. The society members have generally been intellectuals rather than workers. Early members were writers like Sidney and Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw, H.G.Wells and Dr.Annie Besant.

During these years, Dr. Besant wrote and spoke, studied, worked and travelled for night and day, in the interest of the Socialist Movement. She spoke on various subjects like reapportionment of the land, taxation, the cost of Royalty, the obstructive power of the House of Lords, Irish Home Rule, War, capital punishment, flogging, labour issues, public libraries, national education, fair trial, bail and legal defense for workers, recreational facilities for the poor etc. She also spoke against the government policy in Ireland, in Transval, in Burma, in Egypt and later in India.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Besant had found time to study science in London University for Matriculation class, and received advanced certificates in eight different sciences. In 1887, she was elected to the London School Board, in which capacity she served there for successive years, and refusing re-election at the end of that of period. She demanded for proper treatment of children. Her contribution in London School Board was the most solid achievement of her career. She laid the foundations of the School's Medical Services. She worked tirelessly for the introduction of free education for all in England.

Dr. Besant led an agitation for an 'Eight-hour day' for factory workers, and also a movement against unemployment in 1887. She formed a 'Matchmakers Union' in 1888 for the better conditions of the Match Workers. Dr. Besant was the member of Social Democratic Federation. She became famous for successfully organising the first British Trade Union for Women. She acted as the Secretary of this Trade Union, which was for a long time the strongest Women's Trade Union in England.

In the midst of all these activities, there began the slowly growing conviction in the mind of Annie Besant that some thing more was needed than just the correction of separate wrongs, that there was something Other than more behind these great social problems. She got her first glimpse of 'Law in Nature' from A.P. Sinnet's book *The Occult World*. She investigated spiritualism, read a variety of books on occultism, seeking desperately for that something real which she sensed lay behind these matters.

During her socialist activities, Dr. Besant had met W.T.Stead. Together they had collaborated in publishing a small paper. *The Link*. It was designed to draw the labour groups together. Occasionally he gave to her a book to review for his other publication, *Review of Reviews*. He gave also H.P. Blavatsky's book, *The Secret Doctrine* to her for review. The reading of that book was the turning point in Besant's life. She could find the real truth, which beyond all her efforts at social and political reform. She says:

... I was dazzled, blinded by the light in which disjoined facts were seen as parts of a mighty whole ... they all had to be slowly unravelled later, the brain gradually assimilating, that which the swift intuition had grasped as truth²¹

Dr. Besant wrote her review and asked for introduction to Madame Blavatsky.²²

21 Annie Besant, *An Autobiography*, Op.Cit., P.310.

22 Dr. Besant found the truth, while she opened the *Secret Doctrine* for

Dr. Besant tried hard to fight against all injustices before she joined the Theosophical Society. She had largely conquered public prejudice by her great work on the London School Board. She had a plunge into a new vortex of strife and made herself a mark of ridicule.²³ She asked herself a series of questions that

Must I turn against Materialism, and face the shame of Publicly confessing that I had been wrong, misled by intellect to ignore the soul. Must I leave the army that had battled for me so bravely, the friends who through all brutality of social ostracism had held me dear and true? And he, the strongest and trust friend of all, whose confidence I had shaken by my Socialism - must he suffer of seeing his co-worker, his co-fighter_____and leave the ranks of Materialism? What would be the look in Charles Bradlaugh's eyes when I told him that I had become a Theosophist? . . . The struggle was sharp and keen, but with none of the anguish of old days, in it, for the soldier had now fought many fights and was hardened by many wounds ____

review. She felt that ... "I had gone into spiritualism, I went into it again ... But I got no real satisfaction until I got the *Secret Doctrine*, ... I had long been deeply troubled as to the 'beyond' of all my efforts at social and political reform. My own socialism was that of Love, there was much Socialism that was of hatred, and I often wondered if out of hatred any true improvement could spring Here, Theosophy, with its proof of the higher nature in man came as a ray of light, and its teaching of the training of that nature gave solid ground for hope ... that its call to limitless self-sacrifice for human goal.

See, for details: W.T. Stead, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., Pp.90-91.

²³ C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P.42.

When Dr. Besant made her second visit to Madame Blavatsky, she applied for membership in the Society and became a member on 10th May, 1889.²⁴

After becoming a Theosophist, Dr. Besant, adopted Theosophy as her faith, humanity remained her surging passion. Almost until the end of her life, there arose situations in her work when she must make decisions on the side of honour, or justice, or Truth at the cost of friendships or of misunderstanding of her motives, or of loss of faith in her wisdom.

Before Madame Blavatsky's death in 1891, she appointed Annie Besant to succeed her as head of the Esoteric School. On Col. Olcott's death in 1907, she was elected President of the Theosophical Society. She filled both offices until her death in 1933.

Almost immediately upon coming to India for the first time in 1893, Dr. Besant began to try to awake Indians to the glory of their heritage, to call forth from them the self-respect which has been generally smothered by the attitude and exploitation of their western rulers. During all the years, she worked for educational opportunity for them, for better labour conditions, for the revival and uplifting of eastern faiths especially Hinduism, to better conditions of Indian women and lift their status to something near what it had been in the days of India's past grateness.

²⁴ Ibid, p.314.

Review of Literature:

A large number of writings do exist on 'Dr. Annie Besant and her life' in different dimensions on various aspects such as social, cultural and religions. C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer wrote *Annie Besant*.²⁵ It is a biographical sketch focussed on her childhood, early struggles, her contribution to Theosophy and Theosophical Society and her work for Home Rule in India. The book by Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*²⁶ deals with a clear picture of her biographical sketch. But the major contribution stressed on her activities on education, Indian Politics and Social Reform. He gave his early memories and share his experience with Dr. Besant. Another book by him is entitled *Annie Besant as Women and Leader*.²⁷ He gave information about her life style as she was Indianised. Her oratorical skills, gestures, lectures and letters to the author were more informative. A book by W.T. Stead entitled *Annie Besant*²⁸ was written in 1891. It was a pure character-sketch of Annie Besant. It deals with

²⁵ C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer, *Annie Besant* New Delhi, 1963.

²⁶ Shri Prakasa, *Annie Besant* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1954.

²⁷ Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant as Woman and Leader*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1941.

²⁸ W.T. Stead, *Annie Besant*, (Character Sketch-1891) TPH, Adyar, 1946.

her early life, marriage, involvement with socialism, spiritual conflict leading to Theosophy.

A book by G.S. Arundale, entitled *The Biographical Sketch of Annie Besant*²⁹ deals with various stages of life of Annie Besant. He narrates her contribution to Theosophy and Theosophical Society under her presidentship between 1907 and 1933. He writes on her tours during her life time. A book was written by Rosemary Dinnage, *Annie Besant*³⁰ which deals with the critical estimate of Annie Besant in Social and political fields. Another work by Annie Taylor *Annie Besant*³¹ focusses on the biographical sketch of Annie Besant.

Apart from these, many contemporary persons of Dr. Besant wrote many articles on Besant and her activities. Bernard Shaw wrote *Annie Besant's passage through Fabian Socialism* which deals with Dr. Besant's association with Shaw, and Fabian Society,³² and also her involvement in socialistic movements in England in her early life. George Lansbury, a contemporary to Dr. Besant wrote *Mrs. Besant as a Politician*.³³ He witnessed her activities on social and political life in Britain. He gave information about women suffrage movement in England during 1913 and

29 G.S. Arundale, *The Biographical Sketch of Annie Besant*, Madras, 1929.

30 Rosemary Dinnage, *Annie Besant*, New Delhi, 1986.

31 Annie Taylor, *Annie Besant*, New York, 1992.

32 James.H.Cousins, (ed), *The Annie Besant Centenary Book (1647-1947)* October, Adyar, Madras, 1947.

33 Ibid.

1914. He mentioned also her work in India. Another contemporary, C. Rajagopalachari wrote on Annie Besant *The Revival of Religion in India*³⁴ which deals with her revival movement in Hinduism and her contribution to the cause of Indian Freedom.

Another contemporary to Dr. Besant, Gordon Pearce wrote *Annie Besant and Scout Movement*.³⁵ It deals with her participation of Scout in India and her cultural activities. C.S. Trilokakar wrote *Annie Besant and Reforming Indian Education*³⁶ dealing with her major contribution to education. Subramaniya Iyer and B. Shiva Rao and Rangaswamy Iyer³⁷ wrote numerous articles on Annie Besant, dealing with her political life in general. Janes.H.Cousins wrote *Dr. Besant as Builder*,³⁸ and focussed on her contribution to Theosophy and Theosophical Society in India. N. Sri Ram Wrote *Dr. Besant as the statesman*³⁹ which deals with her political ideology of Indian village and panchayat system conception of political authority and Commonwealth of Nations.

Dr. Annie Besant, herself is known as a great author. From the beginning of her life she made constant writings on religion, philosophy.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

science and politics. She published a number of articles, pamphlets, magazines and books which were nearly 400 in number. She collaborated with others in writing of 46 books and pamphlets. She translated 6 books and edited in all 12 periodicals during her life time. Some of the important books and pamphlets by Dr. Annie Besant, were: *India Bound or Free*,⁴⁰ which deals with Indian village and council, education system in past and present day and low literacy rate under colonial rule, Indian Industries, economic system and which also gave suitable solutions. Another book on the same lines was on *India: A Nation*⁴¹ which deals with a plea for Self-Government in India, steps to freedom and work for Home Rule for India, and Religion and Nationality. Another book *Wake Up India*⁴² deals with the plea for social reform, her views on girls education, foreign travel, against caste system and early marriages. *The Birth of New India*⁴³ deals with Besant's concept on Education, Indian Politics, Society and Religion besides some lectures given by her.

A book entitled, *Builder of New India*⁴⁴ deals with Besant's views on education, politics, society and religion. The Book entitled, *How India Wrought for Freedom*⁴⁵ deals with the study of National Congress as told

40 Annie Besant, *India Bond or Free*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1939.

41 Annie Besant, *India:A Nation*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1915.

42 Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1917.

43 Annie Besant, *The Birth of New India*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1917.

44 Annie Besant, *The Builder of New India*, TPH, Adyar, Madras in 1942.

45 Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, Madras in 1917.

from official records during 1885-1914. This work also deals with the constitutional struggle for freedom and demand for Home Rule. Another Book on the same lines, *The Future of the Indian Politics*, gives an idea of colonial administration and an understanding of contemporary problems. The work also urges the Theosophists to awaken the society, work for Home Rule Agitation, Commonwealth Bill and Self-Government for India.

The book written by Besant on *India and the Empire*⁴⁷ contain various lectures regarding Indian problems reflected on Social, Political and Economic exploitation. The book, on *Education as the basis of National Life*⁴⁸ deals with the importance of education under national control and necessity of ideals of Indian system of education. Another book, *The Religious Problems in India* is written on various religious ideas on Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikkism⁴⁹

Apart from these books, *The Besant Spirit Series*⁵⁰ Vol.I, II, III and IV deals with Besant's works, on education, Religion, Social Reform

46 Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, TPH, Madras, 1922.

47 Annie Besant, *India and the Empire*, London in 1914.

48 Annie Besant, *Education as the basis of National Life*, Madras 1917.

49 Annie Besant, *The Religious Problems of India*, Madras, 1909.

50 Annie Besant, *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.I-IV, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1938.

and Political ideas. It is a compiled work on various lectures, letters and messages of Besant. She also wrote *An Autobiography*.⁵¹ It deals with her memories from early childhood, her youth, participation in various socialist movements, her association with a number of personalities and numerous organisations connected with Theosophy. Most of her writings were published by Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar, in Madras.

On Theosophy, Theosophical Society and its growth in India, a number of authors have reflected through their writings.

Josephine Ransome wrote a book: *A Short History of Theosophical Society*.⁵² Vol.I and Vol.II. It deals with the complete history of Theosophy and Theosophical Society and its genesis, the work of Theosophy in India as well as other countries. The activities of four Presidents of Theosophical Society⁵³ were mentioned. The Book edited by C.Jinarajadasa, entitled, *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society*⁵⁴ and also the other book entitled, *The History of Theosophy and Theosophical Society*⁵⁵ also

51 Annie Besant, *An Autobiography* (3 edition) TPH, Adyar, 1983.

52 Josephine Ransome, *A Short History of Theosophical Society*, Vol.I-II, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1938.

53 The founder President of Theosophical Society H.S. Olcott 1875-1907, Dr. Besant 1907-1933, G.S. Arundale 1933 to 1945 and Jinaraja Dasa. 1945.

Josephine Ransome, *A Short History of Theosophical Society*, Vol.I-II, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1938.

54 G. Jinarajadasa, (ed), *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society*, Madras in 1925.

55 *The History of Theosophy and Theosophical Society*, (Study course

deal with the origin of Theosophy, the society and its works in various countries, with a brief life sketch of H.S. Olcott, H.P. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, and others. The books by G.S. Arundale, *Problem of Education*⁵⁶ Sadasiva Iyer on *The Problem of Social Reform*⁵⁷ and B.P. Wadia on *Problem of National and International Politics*⁵⁸ deal with Indian Education and various problems existing in Indian society.

B.P. Wadia's book entitled, *Swadeshi and Swaraj*⁵⁹ deals with self Government in India and political ideas. Betram Keightely wrote on *The Objects of Theosophical Society*⁶⁰ and H.P. Blavatsky on *Original Programme of Theosophical Society* deal with objects of Theosophy and organisation of the society.⁶¹ H.S. Olcott wrote his memories and the work of Theosophical Society during his life time, entitled. *The Old Diary Leaves*

book) Wheaton (USA) n.d.

56 G.S. Arundale, *The Problem of Education* TPH, Madras in 1917, (TS Conventional Lectures Adyar, 1917).

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 B.P. Wadia, *Swadeshi and Swaraj*, TPH, Adyar, Madras in 1920.

60 Betram Keightely, *The Objects of Theosophical Society*, Madras in 1921.

61 H.P. Blavatsky, *The Original Programme of Theosophical Society*, TPH, Adyar, Madras 1931.

Vol. I, II, III, IV, V, and VI.⁶² Mamidipudi Venkata Rangaiah's, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*⁶³ Vol.2 deals with the Home Rule Movement in Andhra, the activities of Dr. Besant and other Theosophists. Another book *The History of Congress* Vol.1⁶⁴ (1885-1935) by B.Pattabhi Sitaramayya deals with Dr. Besant and her participation in national politics and as President of Indian National Congress in 1917 are mentioned.

An Autobiography by Deshabhakta Kondavenkatappaiah Pantulu (Telugu)⁶⁵ deals with his association with Besant. B.N.Pande's book entitled *A Centenary of History of Indian National Congress*, Vol.1 (1885-1919)⁶⁶ and another book on the same lines, A.M.Zaidi's *Indian National Congress: The Glorious Tradition*⁶⁷ deal with Annie Besant in Indian Politics and as president of Indian National Congress. Gunturu Venkata Subbaiah's *Annie Besant*,⁶⁸ and the Book by Raj Kumar, *Annie Besant rise to power in Indian*

62 H.S. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol.I-IV, TPH, Adyar, 1974.

63 Mamidipudi Venkata Rangaiah, *The Freedom Struggle in A.P.*, Hyderabad, 1969.

64 Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitharamaiah, *The History of Congress*, Madras in 1935. (Vol.1, 1885-1935.)

65 Deshabhakta Kondavenkatappaiah, *An Autobiography*, Hyderabad, 1966.

66 B.N. Pande, *A Centenary of History of INC*, Vol.1, 1885-1919, New Delhi, 1985.

67 A.M. Zaidi, *INC, The Glorious Tradition*, New Delhi, 1987, New Delhi in 1987.

68 Gunturu Venkata Subbaiah, *Annie Besant*, (Telugu) Anakapalle (Andhra

Politics (1914-1917)⁶⁹ deal with her political ideology, leadership and participation in Indian politics. Dr. Verinder Grover and Dr. Rajnana Arora have written a book entitled, *Annie Besant*⁷⁰ which deals with the compiled works and lectures of Annie Besant on education, Social Reform, Indian Politics and Religion. It also deals with various articles written by different personalities, like C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Renuka Ray, Sri Prakasa, George West, B. Shiva Rao, etc. J. Krishna Murthy's *The Purpose of Education*⁷¹ deals with the Theosophical ideas of education for children.

Apart from these, there are various writings on Besant in Journals, News Papers, Pamphlets, Magazines and Reports. *The Theosophist* the main organ of Theosophy, deals with the spread of Theosophy,⁷² news and activities of the members. It reflected on various aspects such as education, Religion, social reform and politics. Another news magazine, *The Prasnotara*⁷³ deals with the activity of Theosophy and Theosophical Society in India. The Journal, *The Sanmarga Bodhini*⁷⁴

Pradesh) in 1975.

⁶⁹ Raj Kumar, *Annie Besant Rise to Power in Indian Politics 1914-1917*, New Delhi 1981.

⁷⁰ Verinder Grover and Ran Jana Arora, *Annie Besant*, New Delhi, 1993.

⁷¹ J.Krishnamurthy, *The Purpose of Education*, Madras, n.d.

⁷² *The Theosophist*, TPH, Adyar, Bombay, since 1879-1933.

⁷³ *The Prasnotara*, Beneras, 1905.

⁷⁴ *Sanmarga Bodhini* (Telugu), Bellary, 1897.

(Telugu) deals with the spread of Theosophy, activities of Theosophical branches and various news of national importance. *The Theosophic Thinker*⁷⁵ the other journal, focusses on Theosophic activities, propogation of Theosophy in India. *Divyajanna Samaja Darshini* and *Divyajnana Deepitka* (Telugu) deals with the work of Theosophical Lodges and the spread of Theosophy. It published various articles on religion, science on Theosophic lines.

In a recent article by V. Geetha and S.V. Rajadherai entitled *one thousand years of Brahminitude-Arrival of Annie Besant*,⁷⁷ it is argued that Annie Besant's emphasis on aryan culture is one of the important factors that contributed to the growth of superiority of Brahmins. The article brings into focus how her political activities in Madras presidency served as a potent factor which resulted in the emergence of counter-ideology in the form of non-Brahmin and Self-Respect movements.

The number of pamphlets published from Theosophical Publishing House called *Adyar Pamphlets* deal with Home Rule League, Education, Social Reform and Religion. And also the educational reports such as *Theosophical Educational Trust Reports* (1916-1917), *Society for promotion of National Education reports* (1917), the statistical data of schools of Madanapalle, Madras and other places.

⁷⁵ *The Theosophic Thinker*, Bellary, 1894.

⁷⁶ *Divyajnana Samaja Darshni, Divyajnana Deepika* (Telugh) Guntur, 1915, 1975.

⁷⁷ *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.XXX, No.28, July 15, 1995. pp.1768-73.

Most of the works on Annie Besant either glorified or criticised her movement. In the present study an attempt is made to project Theosophy and Annie Besant from a historical perspective. The various aspects of Theosophy and Theosophical Society such as political, educational, social and cultural have been analysed. In particular, the contribution made by Annie Besant in various fields are critically assessed.

Importance of the Study:

Most of the works on Theosophical movement and on Annie Besant seems to be confined to the discussion of a few aspects and they fail to present a comprehensive picture of contemporary social realities. For example, many of the works on Annie Besant were mainly biographical in nature. The pure narrative of Annie Besant's life in these works are often found lacking critical approach. We are well aware that biographical narratives generally suffer from two important shortcomings. They tend to be either eulogistic or highly critical. This is true in the case of biographical works on Annie Besant perhaps due to deep sense of attachment to Theosophy and Annie Besant made the writings nostalgic in their presentation. The personality of a person is socially moulded, the influences of society on individuals are interlinked and interdependent. These things can not be bifurcated into water-tight compartments for any historical analysis.

The contribution of Annie Besant either for Theosophical Movement or for Indian political scene is to be analysed against the background of the contemporary situation. Any attempt which lacks such a perspective tends to be conclusively falsified. Many of the biographical works on Annie Besant suffer from this and the present work tries to make an

attempt in considering Annie Besant as a product of historical forces. Despite the fact, that her initiatives and struggle in India suffered from a few shortcomings like upper caste social base and mixture of religious principles in public life, as she was not conscious of their concomitant side-effects on society. The case of late 19th century social reformers of whom Annie Besant also was considered as one such reformer may be considered here. Though most of them were ardent supporters of social change in India, they were subject to a false consciousness in so far as they eulogised British rule in political terms. Contemporary social setting and historical compulsions always tend to impose certain limitations on those people who make serious attempts to affect a change in contemporary times. Any historical analysis which does not pay attention to these facts is sure to undo the importance of any study dealing with historical facts. Against this background, many biographical works on Annie Besant try to project her in extremities either as a champion of Indian Culture or as a revivalist of blind traditionalism. Both these arguments do not seem to be either self supporting or historically viable. The present work tries to study various aspects of her personality, social work, and political contribution and makes an attempt to throw light on historical truth which lies hidden between such extreme estimates of Annie Besant. It also focusses upon the shortcomings of her work and movement in Indian Society during the active period of her life. It is hoped that such an attempt breaks new ground in historical research on Annie Besant and her programme in India, the launching pad for which was Theosophical movement.

The Theosophical Movement also is considered by critics as a movement which was responsible for revivalist outlook in Indian society during late

19th and early 20th century. While the employment of the term 'revivalist' may be justified with regard to the activities of Dayananda Saraswati, whose movement primarily remained within a religious mould, it is a misnomer in the case of Theosophical movement. In fact, Theosophy is not a religious sect in the strict sense of the term. It represents a universal idea which combines in itself, a strong notion of "truth higher than religion". At the same time, it attaches greater importance to lofty principles of various faiths. These two aspects enabled Theosophy to become a universally accepted system of a new faith, which is in a strict sense, neither a founded religion nor a proselytizing creed.

Different aspects of Theosophical Movement bear testimony to this fact. Its programme of action in social service activities is highly praiseworthy. Its serious efforts in the direction of promoting education among the most ignorant sections of society are an unflinching evidence to its magnanimous approach to a social issue. The establishment of exclusive schools for lower castes (Panchamas) is a unique feature of education under Theosophy. Such schools were founded in Madras, Madanapalle and Nellore. The educational institutions under the control of Christian missionary societies were bent upon converts to Christianity, and most often these institutions remained as centres of proselytisation. The Theosophical educational institutions worked for promoting the spread of knowledge among the most ignored sections in the Indian Society. Theosophical Society thus became a forerunner even to Gandhi, who in the Post-1920 period laid great emphasis on Harijan upliftment.

In the face of intense activities of Christian missionary societies, the wake of indigenous opposition to the same and the assertion of indigenous religious practices by Indians, the Theosophical movement had but little scope for social action. Without state's support and political control, it was highly difficult for a new movement like Theosophy to strike roots in a foreign land. It was this historical necessity which made Theosophists project Indian cultural practices through Theosophy. Despite the fact that leaders like Henry Steel Olcott and Annie Besant were thoroughly influenced by Indian spiritual writings, such an attempt is to be looked at from this angle where the leaders of new movement were in a dire need of local support. Its attachment to Indian ideals, no doubt, was unconsciously responsible for the rise of cultural revivalist tendencies.

Theosophical movement tried to project its ideals in the fight for Home Rule. The efforts of Annie Besant in taking the movement to grass roots level are well known. However, her lack of total understanding of political atmosphere in India vis-a-vis colonial designs, was responsible for the partial success of the movement. Viewed from these three perspectives - social, cultural and political Theosophical movement stands distinct as a popular movement which tried to weave different aspects of contemporary society into its programme.

The present work attempts to assess the contributions made by Dr. Besant and tries to locate Theosophical Movement in a proper historical framework. It is also the purpose of this study to show that Annie Besant and Theosophical Movement in Madras presidency are not one sided but

multi-dimensional. For this purpose, it banks on a wide variety of original sources that include contemporary writings, journals, pamphlets besides numerous books and articles

CHAPTER - II
THEOSOPHICAL EDUCATION

The concept of Theosophical education was introduced in India at a time when the British system of English education made deep inroads into the sub-continent. Lord Macaulay the chief architect of new English education wanted to leave the indigenous people 'Indian in blood and colder and western by their nature and thinking'. Culturally the new English education was implicitly intended to induce a psychology of subordination among Indians. If the Indians were wedded to western modes, knowledge, life-style and thinking, the antagonism between western-moulded Indians and western colonial rule in India would be minimised. Secondly, the new English education was aimed at securing English-knowing Indians to fill the subordinate ranks in civil administration. Consequently, the history of education and its growth have been influenced by colonial consideration of the country's administration, cultural dominance and political requirements.

A brief look at the evolutionary aspects of new English-education reveals few significant aspects. Diffusion of western knowledge through education was believed to be favourable to the maintenance of British rule and the infusion of such knowledge would promote their commercial interests. For example, Charles Travelyan, a well known colonial bureaucrat and a former Governor of Madras, was of the opinion that independence to India, which was a certainty in future, could be gradually

extended without any trouble through an instrument like education.¹ Such a step would be favourable to the British commercial interests in future when India attained Independence.

On the other hand, western religious ethics were being imported through the new education. It was tried by way of religious and moral instruction in various educational institutions run by the government as well as Christian missionary societies. The 1813 Act eased out the rigidities and enabled the Christian missionaries to enhance the rate of their activities in India. In fact, the European traders made an open confession at the time of their landing that their interests in India would be 'Christianity and species', two terms which symbolised religion and trade.² It can be seen later that while the political economy was a major concern of the colonial rulers in India, religions aspect was freely left in the hands of Christian missionaries. These missionaries in turn received help from the colonial government, some times directly and some times indirectly.

The emphasis on religious aspect and the intense quest to find converts to Christianity are attested by the proselytisation measures of various missionary societies in the establishment of educational institutions with an eye on detailed Biblical instructions and the

¹ For more details see, Syed Mohmood, *A History of Education in India*, Aligarh, 1895, pp2233-237.

² Aparna Basu, 'Colonial Education : A Comparative Approach' in the *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Gorakhpur, 1989-90. p.711.

support of colonial government to these activities even from early decades of 19th century. By and large it was believed that the new English education would prepare the Indians to embrace Christianity and thus the space for cultural antagonisms would be reduced.

It is further seen that the new English education in India ignored aspects of science in its contents. Indians were encouraged to study only arts and humanities. Any encouragement to the development of science and technical education in India would prove detrimental to British interests. The colonial rulers needed only people with knowledge in English to work as subordinate employees in British administration. It was natural then that they did not pay any greater attention to subjects like science and technology in their curriculum. All these strands had a greater influence on the colonial education system, promoted by the British in India.

On their part, Indians shed down their traditional education and took to English education. The efforts of Christian missionaries loomed large over the field of education since the colonial government was apathetic in promoting mass education on any large scale. The fiscal allocation to this encouraged Christian missionary societies in this field. As a result, the growth of English education was invariably dominated by Christian missionary societies. Apart from missionaries, educated intellectuals, social reformers and liberal minded local Zamindars established educational institutions to promote the growth of education in Indian Society.³ As a result of all these efforts the new English

3 For example, in Andhra region of Madras presidency reformers, intellectuals and liberal Zamindars like Kandukuri Veerashalingam, Raghupathi Venkatarathnam Naidu, Samineni

education has showed a tremendous growth and progress by late 19th century.

The expansion of English education in India was not, however, without any trouble and resistance. The excessive indulgence of missionaries in the propagation of Biblical morals in the school met with an unprecedented opposition from indigenous society. Unhindered interference of Christian missionaries in education and indigenous religious practices and state-sponsored support to these activities remained a great irritant to people. The lion's share in grant-in-aid went in favour of missionaries. Most of subjects in the school curriculum revolved round western religious ethics. The questions were religious in nature in most of the examinations.⁴ English educated intellectuals, social reformers, the press, the common people and above all, the public bodies and organisations of middle 19th century unanimously opposed the activities of Christian missionary institutions. In the face of popular opposition the missionaries began assuming a role of secondary importance in the field of education by late 19 century. They began to consider missionary education as an auxiliary agency and it was intended to play a preparatory evangelical role in order to diffuse Christian faith. For example, this aspect became more pronounced in the case of Protestant missionaries in South India.⁵

Muthunarasimha Naidu, the Rajahs of Venkatagiri, Pithapuram and Vijayanagaram promoted private educational institutions.

4 K.H.S.S. Sundar, 'Valasa Vidhyavidhanam - Anvelinta Mataprameyam' (Telugu) in *the poceedings of A.P. History Congress*, Tenali, 1994, Pp. 112-114.

5 A. Mathew, 'Protestant Missionary Attitudes Towards Higher Education

The introduction of Theosophical education is to be looked at from this background. On the one hand, the growth of English education was very impressive and on the other, it was facing opposition from Indian people to the religious interference of missionaries. When Theosophy set its foot on Indian soil, it was guided by these existing realities in the society. As a result, the Theosophical education was viewed in India as a 'golden mean' to escape the wrath of popular ire. It should be noted that Theosophy was a new faith which was devoted for universal good. In its operational aspects it was not a political force to impose its will on Indians like the British colonial rulers. Being originated in western society and given to a belief of universal brotherhood and noble religious path of life, it conceived education as a mode of new thinking which would fit into this mould. Hence, it adopted western framework for its educational institutions. Unlike the British system of new English education, Theosophical education gave importance to various aspects viz, arts, science, morality, physical growth, environment and above all lofty principles of religion. To put it in brief, Theosophy conceived education as an 'exercise in totality' which has been thoroughly aimed at overall development of all learners. The details of this system of education are discussed in succeeding pages.

Theosophy was never confined only to a discussion and propagation of moral and religious principles. Apart from these it was also the mission

and Nationalism in Madras Presidency, 1872-1930' in *Indian Dissertation Abstracts*, Vol.XVI, No.2, April-June 1987, Pp.220-221.

of the Theosophical Society to enable the west to learn the knowledge of the orient. However, the great contribution of the Theosophists could be seen in the furtherance of Theosophical education and this was identified by Dr. Annie Besant.

Theosophy is not a religious sect and it represents a universal idea which combines in itself a strong notion of truth, higher than religion. At the same time, it attaches greater importance to lofty principles of religions and morals. These two aspects enabled Theosophy to become a universally accepted system of a new faith which was in strict sense, neither a founded religion nor a proselytising creed. It was a synthesis of higher values embodied on various religious faiths with a strong emphasis on universal good. Theosophy is to cannot knowledge concerning the inner nature of man and his environment. It has offered a philosophy which renders life intelligible and demonstrates the inviolable nature of the laws which govern its evolution.

Apart from the religious revival it was also the mission of the Theosophical society to bring the western nations to drink at the pure well of Indian thought and knowledge.⁶

According to Theosophical Education, the child must be seen as a spirit evolving from within latent powers, and bringing with him definite facilities. Child education must be based on the study of the individual child and fitted to his intellect and his temperament. An Individual Education is to study the qualities, the capacities and the powers of the

⁶ Annie Besant, *Theosophy and Theosophical Society*, Adyar, Madras, 1913, P.3.

child, and provided by a large amount of freedom.⁷ Theosophy believed that each child should receive an education suited to develop his facilities and this will make him useful in his future life to his community and to the country. The object is to make out the child the citizen that the nation wants. He is to live in the family, in the country and in the nation which has relations with other nations.

As Dr. Besant said 'the Education must be made to fit the needs of the child, not the child be made to fit the education.'⁸ The object of education is to make him as fit as his nature to make the best of what is there in him, to find out the real qualities and capacities of the child and understand him. That framework of education should fit to the child but not force the child into a system which does not fit him.

The freedom comes with responsibility, power and duty to any person or any nation. The child needs courage to face the burdens and responsibilities and it needs Wisdom to be guided to on the right direction.⁹

Dr. Besant emphasised that the education of the child should be very largely one that seeks to give him opportunities of manifestation rather

⁷ The Theosophist, August, 1928, in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*. The Besant Spirit Series, (TPH), Adyar, 1942, P.448.

⁸ The Theosophist, 1st June, 1917 in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., P.398.

⁹ 'The Problem of Reconstruction in *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol. I, TPH, Adyar, 1938, pp.60-61.

than to impose on him the methods of development . . . the duty of the teacher is to aid the growth and not to try to change it.¹⁰ The real object of the Theosophical Education was to train the body in health, vigour and grace, to feel the reverence for all classes and to sympathise with the joys and sorrows of others. Even the most spoiled child according to Theosophy, could be brought around by love and not fear. J.Krishnamurthy, who as an ardent Theosophist also subscribed to the same view. According to him imposing any kind of discipline is mere suppression and is the result of fear. His remedy to indiscipline among the students is to have right kind of education.¹¹ According to J.Krishnamurthy, the true education should give an opportunity for the natural development of individual without fear, so that he shall express his capacity, his understanding of life according to his own natural way.¹² When that child is without fear, then he can pursue and develop capacity without being threatened and the pursuit of truth is in the full and harmonious development of the individual, without the fear of the consequence that arises from action based on independent thought.

The education is not training of an isolated individual but of an individual living within a social order in society. The human being is

¹⁰ Annie Besant, *The Ideas of Theosophy*, Madras, 2nd. Edition, 1923, P.27.

¹¹ D. Rajagopal, (ed.) *Commentaries on Living : Second Series from the Note Books of J.Krishnamurthy*, IVth impression, London, 1969, Pp. 48-49.

¹² J. Krishnamurthy, *The Purpose of Education Pamphlet*, (An Address to the National College, Trichinopoly, January 12, 1930), Star Office, Madras, n.d, P.12.

not an isolated but an interdependent being in the society. He is a developing organism in a civilized society. A large course of human social experience brings with him into the world a very definite character. Being a social product, his place and function, his discharge of right working and thought of the whole may influence the society. Hence, Education must prepare the youth and make ready to obey with social duties and responsibilities. He must be seen in relation to his environment like the home, the school and the college. From earliest years the child should train to feel as part of the country with his duties and responsibilities to the motherland and learn to serve the country.¹³

The great aim of education is to bring out of the child to turn all his abilities, his powers, his capacities and to help the community. As Dr. Besant suggested that to develop education both the individual and social conscience should let youth learn to realise the difference between the Laws of Nature and Laws of Man and pay his duty to himself and the country.¹⁴

Genesis of Theosophical Educational Institutions:

The Theosophical Society from the time of the arrival of its founders in India in 1879 has always been deeply interested in the field of education for young Indians. Col. Henry Steel Olcott, the Founder

13 'Principles of Education' in *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.I,Op.Cit., P. 63.

14 'Education for the New Era' in *The Besant Spirit Series*,Vol.I, Op.Cit., Pp.66-68.

President from the very beginning started, the Olcott Harijana Free Schools for education of the panchama castes. He always strove for the upliftment of the underprivileged and rejected classes in the society. Therefore he himself started a free school in June 1894 for imparting elementary education in Tamil and with conversational English to the panchama children near Society's Head quarter at Adyar. The first school building was the Olcott school, started in a small mud hut with forty-five children. The school grew and five other schools were started under the name of 'the Olcott Panchama Free Schools' in Adyar, Madras, with financial contributions from the members of the society.¹⁵ He also did remarkable work in Sri Lanka. He founded there the first Theosophical Buddhist School in 1880, with the help of numerous Theosophists.¹⁶ Col. Olcott was to see that the hope of revival of the great Eastern Religions and he made the great Buddhist propaganda which he has given to Ceylon.

¹⁵ The Panchama School started by H.S. Olcott became the centre of a group of five schools all for Harijans. Dr. W.M. English became the first superintendent of the school. Sir Arthur Havelock the then Governor of Madras visited this school in June 1896 and granted grant-in-aid from the Government. Another School was opened at Kodambhakam in honour of H.P. Blavatsky in 1898. This school was seven and half miles from Adyar. The Third School Damodar School, named after Damodar K. Malavankar was started at Teynampet on 2 October, 1899 with 27 children. A Fourth School was opened in Mylapore in September 1901, bearing the name of Tamil saint Tiruvalluvar. A Fifth School, The Annie Besant School was opened at Krishnam Pet in May 1906 at the suggestion of the Madras Municipality, for the upliftment of the scavengers of the locality. The Municipality gave free of use two huts and also a contribution of 2,400 rupees. All the schools were brought under the management of Board of eight members incorporated on 17 October, 1905 and decided to be called under the collective name of 'The Olcott Panchama Free Schools'.

For details: See, C. Jinarajadasa, (ed). *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society*, TPH, Adyar, 1925. Pp.295-296.

¹⁶ Felix Layton, *The Theosophical Educational Movement*, Op.Cit., Pp.101-104.

He was mainly responsible for the establishment of three Buddhist colleges and two hundred and thirty five Buddhist schools of their ancient faith.¹⁷

In India Olcott, founded a large number of Hindu Boys Societies for study of their religion, to subscribe for libraries and reading rooms and laying foundations for the large educational work. He sponsored Hindu School Boys Aryan league. He published *Arya Balabodhini* for Hindu Boys.¹⁸ After the death of Col. Olcott in 1907, the Theosophical Society's main school for the underprivileged has renamed in his honour as the Olcott Memorial School.

It is interesting to note that all the first three presidents of the Theosophical Society have made 'Education' as one of the greatest interests of their lives.¹⁹ Col. Olcott said that Buddhist children might be relieved from the thralldom of an alien institution the value of Buddhism. Dr. Annie Besant sought to restore to the Indian youth their heritage of splendid traditions of the mother land, freed from the rigidities of a foreign system. Dr. Arundale also felt that the children of the world might be free to enjoy to fulness of the past and anticipate

17 Annie Besant, 'Education and Theosophical Society' in *The commonweal*, 12 March, 1915, TPH, Adyar, p.191.

18 *The Besant Spirit Series*, TPH, Vol.2, Adyar, 1939, p.17.

19 Col. Henry Steel Olcott was the founder-President of the Theosophical Society, till he died in 1907. He was succeeded in his office by Dr. Annie Besant in 1907. After the death of Annie Besant in 1933, George Sydney Arundale was the President of the Society from 1933-1937.

a future in which there might be the real and mutual understanding of the nations, one with the other.²⁰

Col. Olcott was keenly interested to establish scientific education for Indian youth. He opined that the great crying want of modern India today is a scientific school attached to every college and in each centre of schools of technology with appropriate machinery where the most improved methods of the principle to handicrafts could be taught to intelligent lads.²¹ For achieving this object. Col. Olcott was keenly interested to establish educational Institutions.

The educated youth need right direction, cultivated with useful arts, that leads to livelihood, respectable position independence that would also give an employment. India needed the establishment of Technical Schools and Industrial arts for youth with the support of the Government. Indian youth should have a systematic knowledge of Industrial arts and science. Every Indian has to acquire the knowledge of arts and design and to find his rich culture in arts and science as well as philosophy. The Theosophical system of education stood first to encourage the technical education and industrial arts and to give patronage to the Indian identity with great service.²²

20 Josephine Ransome, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, TPH, Adyar, 1938, P. 161.

21 H.S.Olcott lectured at Framji Cowasji Hall, Dobithallas (The Washerman Quarters) on March 23, 1879, in *The Theosophist* (Olcott centenary number) ed., by Annie Besant, TPH, August 1932. Pp. 541-544.

22 E. Wimbridge, 'Technical Education' in *The Theosophist*, Vol.1, No.1, October 1879, Bombay Pp.26-27.

In order to achieve the above ideals of education the Olcott Panchama Free Schools were the beginning for achieving Industrial and Technical education for the down-trodden. It was a centre for all round development in education. The principles and methods adopted in these schools were to keep high standard of work. The school management introduced new methods and taught them as special subjects. The students learned in various subjects like clay-modelling, leaf work, black board and pencil-making, brush drawing, painting etc. A class in book-binding was held weekly in which thirty two students learned.²³ The girls were carefully trained in needle work and dress making and special training provided for old-students in practical crockery. Industrial education occupied main place in these institutions. The parents preferred to send their children to these schools. The increase of attendance has been quite remarkable. The children were studious and were eager to learn. The main idea of running these schools was to teach the poor little pariah children who had no means of education.²⁴

²³ Supplement to the Theosophist, *The Theosophist*, Vol.XXII, No.6, March 1906, TPH, Adyar, P.xvii.

²⁴ General Report of 31 Anniversary and convention of the Theosophical Society held at Adyar, December, 29-30, 1906 in *The Theosophist*, Vol.XXVIII, No. 12, September 1907, TPH, Adyar, Madras, pp. 68-70.

Table No.II-1

The table showing the number of pupils on the rolls of different schools in various standards

Sl No	Class	Damodar School		OlCott School		H.P.B. School		New School		Tirvallvar School		Total	
		B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
1.	Kinder garten	52	20	16	4	9	5	22	11	7	3	106	43
2.	Infant-standard	53	20	21	4	17	5	34	17	9	3	136	62
3.	1st standard	59	17	20	2	17	5	--	--	9	1	85	25
4.	IInd standard	27	11	31	1	16	2	" "		10	5	84	19
5.	IIIRD standard	28	04	28	3	06	0	" "		11	5	73	12
TOTAL		16	02	32	1	15	2	--	--	20	3	83	08
		289		163		99		84		86		731	

Sources: General report of 31 Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society, December 29-30, 1906.

After the Theosophical Society arrived in India, the ideas of Theosophy spread all over the country, through the society's branches. Many Theosophical Society branches were established in various places in Madras presidency. The members of the branches were interested to establish vernacular schools to teach Hindu culture and to propagate Theosophy. The co-founder of Theosophical Society, H.P. Blavatsky had

already felt that "the great practical work done by the Theosophical Society in the shape of establishing Sanskrit schools, inspiring the moral and spiritual condition of its members, and filling them with love and affection and to infuse in them a healthy national spirit, and issuing important publications which threw a flood light on our ancient science and philosophy."²⁵

In order to achieve the ideas of the founders of the society, many educational institutions existed in various places. A Sanskrit Anglo-Telugu School was established in Gooty and it was maintained by donations collected by the members of the Branch. The president of the Branch has also made good work in writings and publications of useful Telugu works. The Kanigiri Branch has patronised translation work of *Mahabharata* into Telugu language.²⁶

The Anantapur Theosophical Society established a Sanskrit School which was called the Vidhya Dakshinamurty Sanskrit School and it was run in a satisfactory manner. The main object of the school was to restore the Hindu dharma.²⁷ A Free Sanskrit School was run by the Bellary Sanmarga

²⁵ 'A confidential circular' copied from *H.P. Balvatsky's Scrap Book*, Vol.XIX, Part-I, pp.131-133.

²⁶ The School was located in a building owned by the branch and had a fund of 500 rupees. The branch made good work in writings, publications of Telugu works such as: the status of the Brahmins in ancient times and their deterioration, Aryan system of charity with quotations from sritis, smiritis and puranas, Aryan system of Marriage and Translation of the late Swamy Dayanand Saraswati's work.

For details see, 'Supplement to the Theosophist', in *The Theosophist*, Vol.XII No.7, April 1891, P.XIVI.

²⁷ Supplement to the Theosophist in *The Theosophist*, Vol.X, No.109,

Samaj²⁸ and a moral class was arranged on every alternate Saturdays.²⁹ For reviving the interest on Theosophical education, a Sanskrit school was opened at Hindupur in Ananthapur District. The Hindu Girls High School was taken up under the auspices of the Masulipatnam Theosophical Society for the promotion of girls' education. A library was established and meetings were held on every Sunday. Theosophical lectures were delivered by leaders. A Sanskrit School was opened in Cuddapah Theosophical Society in 1888. A Sanskrit School has progressed well under the auspices of the Hyderabad Theosophical Society. This branch has wdacquired a large number of books on different subjects.³⁰

Dr. Annie Besant was an educationalist with high aims and was a great spiritual teacher. She impressed upon the people the need for India to develop a national spirit to take its place among the nations of the world

28 The Sanmarga Samaj of Bellary was founded in the month of April 1887. One of the main programmes of the Samaj (Society) was to (a) Publish books (b) to conduct classes in Moral Instruction, (c) to arrange specific lectures based on good books, (d) Sanskrit School (Approved by Government (e) to arrange general lectures based on good books (f) to arrange general lectures on different topics (g) to establish library, (h) to establish a reading room and (i) to publish a journal entitled *Sanmarga Bodhini* to propagate ideas about religious devotion and knowledge, mutual friendship and morality.

For details see, Supplement to the *Sanmarga Bodhini* (Telugu Weekly) Saturday 3rd July, 1897, pp. 1-2.

29 Supplement to the Theosophist, in *The Theosophist*, Vol.X, No.III. December 1888, P.xxix.

30 General Report of the 13 Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society at the Head quarters, Adyar, December 27, 28 and 29 of 1888.

For details see, *The Theosophist* Vol.X, No.112, January 1889, TPH, Adyar, Pp. 13-17.

and to develop educational methods founded on Indian ideals. When Dr. Besant came to India in 1893, she found that those who had modern education on Western lines were beginning to be materialistic and looked down on their ancient faith with indifference. They were carried away by the glamour of western civilization, and apologetic about their own national culture. She awakened the people of India to the glory of their heritage, to the splendour of their own ancient civilization and faith. Basically her plan of education had two distinct aspects : One was the religious foundation and the other was patriotism or love of the Mother Land.³¹

Dr. Annie Besant clearly pointed that the Education must be founded on a knowledge of the past of the country as well as its present; must be designed in accordance with the ancient traditions and national habits and adapted to modern necessities, to meet at every point of an ever-increasing nation.³² Dr. Annie Besant was deeply interested in establishing a purely secular education to young Indians on the basis of their deep philosophy and liberal Hindu Culture.

The four-fold system of education for boys and girls as envisaged by Annie Besant reveals a few significant aspects of the system of education

³¹ Adyar Lodge Public Lecture delivered by S. Sri Ram, on Dr. Besant's work for Education in India, held in Gokhele Hall, Madras on 10 July, 1947.

For Details: *The Indian Theosophist*, Vol.90, No.2, February 1993, Varanasi, 1993, pp.32-33.

³² Annie Besant, *Education as a National Duty*, Pamphlet Series No.23. (A lecture delivered in Bombay on Monday, 9 March 1903) TPH, Benaras, 1903, Pp.2-3.

under Theosophy. The division of education into religious, emotional (moral and mental), physical and environmental subjects provides wholistic approach to the development of the student's personality. The inclusion of physical education as a compulsory item in the curriculum is significant and was totally new in the contemporary English schools in India. The importance given to the development of a sound body is valid even today.

The weightage given to religious teaching is aimed at imparting spiritual qualities to the learners. It may be noted that particular reference to the word 'Hindu' is avoided though the recommendations in the case of 'bhajans' and 'stotras' refer to Hindu faith. However equal encouragement has been given to the study of noble faiths of each religion depending on the religion of the students. It is interesting to note that a comparative study of world religions and their relations to the one followed majority people in India is recommended by the system. It is doubtless to say that such a step was initiated to promote religious harmony in a righteous direction right from the studenthood. Added to this, teaching of the demerits of bigotry and religious intolerance were recommended by the present system. It was a very significant departure from both traditional Indian and colonial system of education which often adhered to preaching of one particular religion. Such direction in Theosophical education is in strict accordance with the principles of Theosophy.

Under the scheme of moral and mental development study of languages, science, mathematics, psychology and training in moral and aesthetic

values have been encouraged. This also shows how Theosophy was attempting to train the students with emphasis on 'totality' of human development. Under this head, two important aspects are to be highlighted.

- (a) Special emphasis on teaching backward students in education. This again is a departure from the existing methods of educational training.
- (b) Training students in self-management and giving them a share in school government. This is highly significant because of the fact that the colonial state unceremoniously denied such right to Indians in the management of Indian Government. What Theosophy was aiming at was in the right direction of training the students in the necessary art of **self-management** and control over their own destinies under the changed socio-economic conditions of colonial regime.

Yet another important ingredient of Theosophical education was instruction in the physiology of sex to the students under instruction as a part of physical education. The underlying current of such a step was perhaps, to inculcate a humanistic approach and respect for each gender. This is to say, it was designed to promote healthy relations between opposite sexes and to drive away notions of gender discrimination. This aspect assumes greater importance in the light of the plight of female members of Indian Society.

Above all, the inclusion of environment aspect in school curriculum was far ahead of the times. Attempt to create a rightful awareness of environment in the process of learning was highly innovative in the system of Theosophical education. It is well known that environmental education gradually became an issue of pivotal importance in the later period. The importance attached to environment in Theosophical education reveals the positive and prophetic nature of thinking among the planners.

The concept of four-fold education under Theosophy provided the much required scope for the development of physical, mental and emotional character of students. In doing so, Theosophy's main objective and cherished ideal was to train students as future citizens even when they are under instruction. In fact, this wholistic approach to education of children was absent in the contemporary society where Theosophical education would definitely score a point. For Theosophy, education was not a mere academic exercise. Rather, it was considered as a system which would beget future citizens empowered with knowledge and upright personality to serve the society with a touch a humanity.

As Dr. Besant suggested the scheme of education should be patriotic and wholly swadeshi but not divorced from the essence of religion. She wanted that Indian orientalism be meticulously moulded by the scientific knowledge of the Occident, and the final goal was the production of well-cultured society. Religion was made the most important plank of education and the youth were trained for social work as a preparation for service to the Mother Land through such organisation as sons and daughters of India. Therefore Scouts, Guards of Honour and cadets of the school and college, were created.

Under Dr. Besant's guidance the Central Hindu College at Benaras was founded. It was the first large institution to embody the teaching of religion as a part of its curriculum. The impulse she gave has influenced hundreds of schools to make religious teaching an integral part of education.³³

33 S.Subramania Aiyar, 'Mrs.Besant as Empire Builder' in *The Annie Besant Centenary Book*, 1847-1947, Adyar, 1947.P.78.

Dr. Annie Besant strongly believed that the National greatness was based on the teaching of religion to the young. The religious teaching should devote without being fanatical and sectarian. The religion should be a unifying force to build nationality and a fostering mother of civic virtues.³⁴ Dr. Besant carried out her work through the net work of her schools and colleges that she founded various places in the land, the most important being the Central Hindu College at Benaras. Her students were taught the literatures of the east and the west. Modern science was a part of their educational syllabus and the teaching of ancient religion, philosophy and ethics also formed an integral part of it. As an ideal and practical worker, she introduced various items of active social reform in her institutions. Brahmacharya as a necessary concomitant for intellectual, emotional and physical growth and it leads to well disciplined education for the youth was adhered. She did not admit married students in her educational institutions.³⁵

Dr. Besant recognised that the awakening of India's national life should be based on religion and spirituality. She wanted to train the younger generation to feel proud of the glorious past and its heritage and sense of patriotism of their mother land. She aimed at making the younger generation not only proud of their country and its past

³⁴ 'The Necessity of Religious Education' in *the Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.1, Op.Cit., P.59.

³⁵ Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1954, P.xx.

achievements, but also to lead well disciplined lives, to build a strong noble character and to develop and devote their talents to the service of their country. She preached the Brother-hood of all Religions.³⁶ Under the able guidance of Dr. Annie Besant, the religious part of education was emphasised in every corner of the country.

Founding the Central Hindu College:

The crowning achievement of Dr. Besant's contribution in educational field was the establishment of the Central Hindu College on the lines of religious and moral teachings as main factors. As she naturally attracted to the deep philosophy of Hinduism, she made her home at Benaras and lectured throughout the length and breadth of India on the religious education of the youth and maidens of the country.³⁷ The result of her teachings was not confined merely to the development of that spirit in the college founded by her, but it spread far and wide and to restore revival of nationalism.³⁸

Dr. Besant herself offered to work for the renaissance of Hinduism and to the rebirth of a truly old system of Indian education because Hinduism had suffered at the hands of ignorant missionaries. The Central

³⁶ A. Rangaswamy Iyer, 'Annie Besant as Practical Idealist' in *Annie Besant Centenary Book*, Op.Cit., Pp.145-146.

³⁷ C.Jinarajadasa (ed.), *The golden Book of Theosophical Society*, (1875-1925), T.P.H, Adyar, Madras, 1925, Pp.297-299.

³⁸ Jamanadas Dwarakadas's article in *Tributes to Annie Besant*,(New India Special Number) August 1924, P.27.

Hindu College was the educational centre to receive both an education in the essentials of Hinduism and an education for Indian citizenship.³⁹

Five years after she came to India a meeting was held with Babu Upendra Nath Basu, Babu Bhagavan Das, and other prominent Theosophists in Benaras on 10 April 1898 to propose the establishment of a college. On 7 July 1898 the college was started and named as Central Hindu College affiliated to the Allahabad University.⁴⁰ Dr. Arthur Richardson was appointed as the first Principal of the college. The aims of the college were clearly stated that it would be "religious secular" college teaching the deep truths of Hindu religion and seeking to unite the best Hindu culture with the best of Western principles of education.⁴¹

The success of this college was phenomenal. Students attended from all parts of the country. The staff was similarly recruited and included many Europeans and made it as a great centre of Hindu learning and Indian patriotism. Dr. Besant published text books on Hinduism entitled the 'Sanathana Dharma Series' with the help of Dr. Bhagavan Das. She

39 G.S.Arundale (ed.), *Annie Besant (An Autobiography)*, T.P.H., Adyar, 1939, Pp. 27-28.

40 Among the Pioneers who helped Dr. Annie Besant were Babu Bhagavan Das, Babu Upendra Nath Basu, Babu Gyanendra Nath Chakravarty Pandit Chedalal, Mr. Bertram Keightley, Dr. Richardson, Miss Lilian Edger and a few others. Within a year of establishment of the school in 1889, the Maharajah of Benaras donated a big block of buildings and large piece of land valued Rs.50,000/- in the outskirts of the city. The school was soon transferred to these Palatial buildings and new classes were opened in the school and the two Intermediate classes were also opened.

For details: C. Jinarajadasa (ed.), *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society (1875-1925)* Op. Cit., P.297.

41 *The Besant spirit series*, Vol.2, T.P.H. Adyar, P. 18.

organised 'the Brother of Service' in 1913. She gave a series of lectures related to educational, social and political reform. They included talks on self-government, colour bar, the colonial system, the caste system and mainly the mass education of boys and girls. These lectures were published in a book called *Wake up India*.⁴² Dr. Besant has carefully planned to unify the various bodies to engage in progressive work; to establish libraries, to form translation committees for the publication of leaflets and pamphlets for propaganda of the educational movement.⁴³

The strong conviction of Theosophy was that every child in the country has a claim upon the nation for sufficient and suitable education.⁴⁴ It was the duty of the Government to provide education for all. Dr. Annie Besant pleaded for the establishment of free and compulsory education in India. Comparatively other countries like England, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland etc. were far more advanced than India in terms of Education.⁴⁵ But as it is too big a task for any

42 C.P.Ramasway Iyer, *Annie Besant*, Op. Cit., P.59.

43 The Theosophical Society Esoteric Section was enrolled by the society members on 20th September, 1913. On the next day, 21st September, a meeting was arranged by all members. In that meeting they unanimously agreed to work for education.

For details: Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, (A Plea for Social Reform) T.P.H., Adyar, 1913, P.298.

44 K.S.S. Seshan, "Stress on Love and Care", *The Hindu*, Madras, July 7, 1992, p. 19.

45 George Sidney Arundale, "The Problem of Education in *The Theosophical outlook Conventional Lectures - 1917*, T.P.H, Adyar, pp.22-23.

Government to carry it out, Theosophy believed in achieving universal compulsory education more by local self-sacrifice and service than by the machinery of the Government or local bodies. Dr. Besant strongly felt that the village education was to be country-wide, and on this foundation was to be raised the super-structure of higher education.⁴⁶ The higher education to be raised to specialisation after 14 years for the ordinary high school with subjects of Arts, Science, Technical, Agriculture, Commerce, etc.

The village Panchayat according to the Theosophy has to cover the day-to-day needs of the people. The powers of the Village Panchayat may be classified into three sections such as Education and Recreation, Protection of Economic interests and Industrialization. Under the powers of Village Panchayat, Education should be looked after by local bodies.⁴⁷ Dr. Besant suggested that the village Panchayat controls primary education and village work-shop and libraries.

The Taluk Sabha controls Lower Secondary or Middle Schools and Model Forms. The District Samithi controls Higher Secondary or High School and Colleges, Technical Colleges and a Technical institute, libraries, Museums and Zoological Gardens. The scheme provides for a good general education and also trains eye and hand and later envisages to open branches of

⁴⁶ C.S. Trilokekar, 'Reforming India's Education', in *The Besant Centenary Book*, Op.Cit., P.65.

⁴⁷ N.Sri Ram, 'Dr. Annie Besant The Statesman', in *Annie Besant Centenary Book*, Op.Cit, P.228.

scientific and technical equipment along specialised lines.⁴⁸

Apart from all these educational methods, Dr. Besant felt that the revival of religious learning, study of Sanskrit, vernaculars, swadeshi crafts, and arts would promote Indian identity. She felt that India has suffered greatly from westernised system of education, in which the old elements of her culture was treated as of no account. Perhaps the greatest gift of Dr. Besant to India has been the foundation of the Theosophical schools and colleges. These educational institutions were focussed into the guiding spirit of Indian education in patriotic outlook with essence of religion and traced the possible advantage of western science and technology. In order to achieve this aim Dr. Annie Besant had great respect for the mother-tongue. She suggested that youngmen study their vernaculars and make them the media of their thought and daily action of life. They must realise that the mother tongue is the great instrument for the upliftment of the country. She strongly believed that no foreign language will ever reach the people so well as their vernacular language which moves their emotions and thrills their hearts. Hence vernacular in which a great literature exists, so great enough and rich enough as to touch the spring of patriotism, to inspire the hearts of the people, and to make them realise their dignity as citizens of the country.⁴⁹ She felt that the Regional Universities with the mother-tongue as the media of instruction were to be established. The research should

48 Annie Besant, 'India: Bond or Free' in *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.1, Op.Cit., P. 144.

49 New India, 16th April 1818, in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Besant Spirit Series, T.P.H., Adyar, 1942., pp.446-447.

be encouraged in the indigenous knowledge of ancient literature, science, art and crafts. To blend all these into a synthesis aiming mainly that such knowledge be offered as a free gift to the Mother Land.⁵⁰

Of all educational activities, Dr. Annie Besant was keenly interested in Girls' education. She pleaded that the education of Indian girls must be shaped, guided and controlled by Indians. She strongly felt that the missionaries could not teach Hinduism or Islam. She suggested that the religious and moral education should be under Indian control for girls. Indian History, scripture, drama, art are to dominate the education of Indian girls. Dr. Besant's voice rose against child marriage system and she demanded that pre-puberty marriage must be abolished. She strongly questioned that if children married at the age of 7 and 8, 9 and 10 and 11 and 12, how can they be educated? If made mothers at age of 13 and 14 and bearing children, of what avail to mention education in the same breath as these?⁵¹ She condemned such practice of early-marriage system. These marriages are visible to men and women blinded by evil custom, hypnotised by habit. These helpless victims were sold into slavery by their own fathers to purchase a husband. She suggested that every Indian came forward to remove the practice of social evil in the society.⁵² And every Indian girl should be educated and made suitable to preparatory for their future work in life. That education should be purposefully planned to bring true culture and civilization.

⁵⁰ C.S.Trilokekar, *Reforming India's Education.*, Op.Cit., pp.62-65.

⁵¹ Dr. Annie Besant, 'Girls Education' in *The Commonweal*, April 16, 1915, T.P.H., Adyar 1915, p. 285.

⁵² *Ibid*, P.286.

The Theosophists believed that education should bring out the 'truth' of life irrespective of the subjects taught in the institution. The primary education would be given to young children till about the age of nine or ten. This primary education mainly consisted of the teaching of reading, writing and simple arithmetic along with moral and sanitary instruction to be common to all classes of community. At the end of these courses most girls would cease further school education and would be trained for their future work according to the position of the parents. If society will provide right education in different spheres of life in women, they will be able of help to her family. This sort of education would make a woman both independent and dependent harmoniously and make the home-life of nations peaceful and happy.⁵³

Dr. Besant strongly felt that if the education of Indian girls which was the heart of the Nation be corrupted, the Motherland will perish by the denationalisation of their women. The religion of Indian woman is often not according to knowledge; perfect in her devotion. She is lacking in philosophical insights; of swift intelligence and quick intuition, she grasps with ease a great truth when it is presented to her, and sees its application to life, but she is often taught to forms and ceremonies, which she uses as channels for her devotion without rationalising them by her understanding. "Add to your faith, 'knowledge'

⁵³ Sri Prakasa, 'The Education of Women' This paper was originally written for the United Provinces Educational Conference in 1916.

For details: see *The Commonwealth*, 17 November, 1917, T.P.H., Adyar, 1917, P.385.

is a precept needed in the home. Whatever else may comprise, Hinduism, must be the foundation and when Hinduism has no longer its temple in the heart of the Hindu woman, the Motherland will be ready for the burning-ghat."⁵⁴ The ethics taught in the education of girls must include patriotism, the realisation of duty to the motherland, of readiness to sacrifice for her weal. Indian History is full of the shining examples of such love and sacrifice and the stories of these daughters of the Motherland will give what is needed.

Dr. Besant established girls schools, which brought women and helped also in the removal of the pardah-system of seclusion of women which was also harmful for the growth of both womanhood and nationhood. Her lectures were based on an ancient Indian thought and philosophy on the one hand and her schools and colleges which popularised to promote the girl education and social reform on the other. In order to achieve her object of ideal education for girls, Dr. Besant engaged herself in the establishment of educational institutions throughout the country through the Theosophical Society.

54 Annie Besant, 'Girls Education' in *The Commonweal*, 16th April, 1915, T.P.H. Adyar, 1915, P.285.

Table No. 11-2

Table showing the number of educational Institutions for girls and the places of their establishment⁵⁵

S.No.	Nature of the Educational Institution	No.of Institutions	Place
1.	Girls college	1	Benaras
2.	High School	1	Benaras
3.	High School	1	Bankipore
4.	Higher Elementary School	1	Kumbhakonam
5.	Lower Elementary Schools	2	Coimbattore
6.	Higher Elementary School	1	Madura
7.	Lower Elementary School	1	Vayalppadu
8.	Sanskrit School	1	Gorakhpur

Source: *The Theosophical Educational Trust Reports: 19 16, p.5.*

The schools worked with the main ideas of religion and service and discipline was maintained as in all Trust Schools. These schools open with a systematic religious prayer. The students of these institutions learned religion as a main plank of education. They were taught subjects related to the lines of Sanatana Dharma, Texts on catechism, Ramayana, Mahabharata moral stories, *Vetri Verkai, Viveka Chandrikai, and Aryamata. Upakhyanam* and the characters of Draupathi, Damayanti and Sita. About 222 girls learnt Sanskrit from Meenakshi Vidhyashala and 120 girls learnt Sanskrit from Saraswati Patashala respectively in Madurai.

⁵⁵ The Strength of Girl students of these institution were more than 1,114. They were taught by 237 teachers, of whom 48 were graduates of University.

For details: *The Theosophical Educational Reports, 1916, (hereafter TET) Adyar, 1917. P.5.*

Apart from these, the girls were taught in sewing, drawing, clay-modelling, mat-making, gardening, needle work, wooden, thread work, leaf painting, plantation, fibre, basket and fancy work, cooking and domestic economy and hygiene in their respective classes. They were also taught Music, Music-drill, flag-drill, kummi and kollatum, marching songs and drill for kindergarten. Some of the schools like Meenakshi Vidhyashala, conducted a Golden chain class for the people on every Sunday. The English games Club for girls was conducted by Miss. Codd in Saraswati Patashala. The main feature of these institutions was to promote girls' education with a view to prepare them for a better life. Special attention was given to the training of character particularly in bearing upon the home life of the nation.

Dr. Besant's concept of National Education:

Among the makers of modern India, Dr. Annie Besant secured a prominent place as a wise educationalist. Her wholehearted assimilation of Indian ideas and her strenuous labours is many sided, particularly in education. Her sphere of activities was not only confined to the propagation of religious tenets of Theosophical Society, but appreciating the importance of moulding the character of the raising generation. She felt that the direction of education must mainly be in the hands of Indians, who must naturally, be primarily interested in the bringing up of their young and the Indians themselves should shoulder the responsibility with a feeling of patriotism.

From 1913 till almost the end of her career Dr. Besant directed and inspired the system of Theosophical education, which was identified with the 'National Education'. She shaped and moulded its policy and

energised true education for humanity. The most important point of 'National Education' is that it must be in Indian hands and under Indian control and must meet the national temperament at every point and develop the national character.⁵⁶ The ideal of national education was wisely planned and directed for the guidance of the public activity. It should be the basis of national life and foundation. In order to maintain the child welfare and their education, the League of Parents and Teachers was established in 1915.⁵⁷ This League brought to light the enormous amount of harm done to children at home and in schools by the barbarous custom of corporal punishment. It took up cases of discipline maintained in schools by the new methods which as one of the objects of the league to advocate and spread national prosperity. The word education literally means a 'leading out'. Theosophists in many lands have sought to make education a process in drawing out the child so that his whole nature can grow in a natural healthy way and he can make constructive contribution to society. And that education should be directed with the sole aim on the moral, intellectual and spiritual welfare of the nation.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ New India, 9th April 1918, in *Annie Besant, Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., P.442.

⁵⁷ The League of 'Parents and Teachers' was founded on 28th December, 1915. The main objects of League were:

- a. To bring about the abolition of corporal punishment both in homes and in schools.
- b. To spread among Parents and Teachers a knowledge of the latest ideas in educational science which affected the training of children. For details, See, *League of Parents and Teachers*, Pamphlet No.2 Adyar and Gwalior, 1915, P.I.

⁵⁸ Annie Besant, *Education as the Basis of National Life*, (A Lecture delivered in Theosophical Hall, at Adyar on 23rd February, 1908)

As the President of the Indian National Congress in 1917 at Calcutta, Dr. Annie Besant got an opportunity of planning out a system of National Education in India.⁵⁹ She felt that the education 'must consider the youth as the embryonic citizen with social duties and social responsibilities, must see him in relation to his environment like the home, the school, the college and from his earliest years, must train as a part of his community with his duties and responsibilities to the mother land.⁶⁰ She suggested that books must be written on Indian lines to inspire the students with pride in a common past, making them regard all the heroes of the past as a common possession as the makers of the India. India should take the principles of the intellectual curriculum in schools and colleges. It should teach Indian History, Indian Philosophy, Indian Medicine, Indian Art Indian Industry, her natural resources, her commerce. Her possibilities should be brought forward and made part of every scheme of national education.⁶¹

Adyar Popular lectures No.2, T.P.H., Adyar, 1908, P.3.

59 Some of the resolutions passed regarding Education Under Besant's Presidentship during Calcutta session were:

- i) The Congress strongly opined that the education of boys and girls to be under Indian control as well as essentially Indian in spirit.
- ii) The Congress resolved and recommended the formation of Indian Boys Scouts in every province under Indian control.

For details: A.M.Zaidi. *Indian National Congress : Glorious Tradition*, Vol.1 (1885-1925), New Delhi, 1985, Pp. 398-401.

60 Ideals of Education for India's in *League of Parents and Teachers*, Pamphlet No.7, Adyar, 1919, pp.6-7.

61 Annie Besant, *Education as the Basis of National Life*, Op.Cit., pp.23-24.

Dr. Besant focussed the constructive argument for true citizenship and to promote the national education. As she felt that the Indian nation will not grow by the influence of any other nation but by the growth of character within India's boundary. Indians can only make themselves free by becoming noble and upright, brave and true. It should build the basis of noble character and of the public spirit which shows itself in true citizenship.⁶²

The Chief characteristics of National Education were as follows:

1. The Schools and Colleges in India should revert to the ancient system of study in the morning and evening only. The present method of having classes during the hottest portion of the day and generally after the heavy meal, is the most unhealthy and injurious and only exists to suit the convenience of European ways of living.
2. To solve the difficulty of maintaining suitable Indian dress, together with same uniformity and maintain the sense of corporate life, the present tendency to wear some distorted form of European dress was responsible for uncleanness which would be avoided if simple Indian customs were adhered to.
3. The special religions of the pupils should receive adequate attention being taught by suitable teachers. While during the course of the school curriculum provision be made for instructing the pupils in the special features of their respective faiths, on every morning and evening, the instruction will be made on the great fundamental and universal principles of life with special reference to India past, its present and future.
4. The music should find a place in Indian Education. Its value is fully recognised in other countries but the Europeans were unable to understand Indian music that it has failed to find a place in the Indian studies. National Music be taught by Indian musicians in the educational institutions.

⁶² Education as National Duty, 9th March, 1903, in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., pp.445-446.

5. To give 'home lessons' or 'home work' was an essential principle of all true Education. It means for preparation for the next day's work.
6. A provision should be made that students should have their occupation during the recess periods. One of the greatest defects of modern education was not to provide for useful occupation when the intellectual and physical periods of instructions are over. The school ought to be a place for the pupils to gain the capacity usefully to enjoy his leisure in terms of recreation.
7. There must be necessity of having a Rest-room attached to every Educational Institution, common to teachers and to the taught.
8. The military training be made compulsory for every student throughout the land.
9. The fundamental principle of education was that no one can truly learn who does not also teach. The establishment of Night Schools and schools for poor children was to be a part of the educational training.
10. An educational institution was a big family. The family service comes naturally through love. The spirit of love and service must permeate the school and college.
11. The student should know about those who made past glories and its culture. Hence, every educational Institution should have the 'Hero-Room' with portraits of patriots.⁶³

The General scheme of National Education as promoted by Theosophists for India, as well as the school education was divided into Primary, Secondary and Higher from birth to 7 years, 7 to 14 year and 14 to 21 years respectively. The medium of instruction in all the schools was to be the mother-tongue. The Secondary education was divided into two main points; the vernacular subjects such as Hindi middle or Urdu middle and

⁶³ George. S. Arundale put forward the National Education in India.

For details, See, G.S. Arundale, *National Education* (Being lecture delivered at the 3rd Anniversary of the Vashya Students' Literary Union, Madras, December 10, 1916), The Common Weal Office, Adyar 1916, P.6.

English to be taught as a second language.⁶⁴ The hours of work was to be from 7 to 10 A.M. and from 2 to 4 P.M. The day's work to begin and end with religious prayers. Hindu, Muslim and Christian prayers were recited in the Theosophical institutions. The Girls'education was to be the same as that of the boys in the primary and secondary stages except that needle work, music and cookery formed a part of the manual training House-hold economy, hygiene, home-science and first-aid, literature, History and Geography were introduced in curriculum.⁶⁵ Technical schools including schools of Agriculture, Trade and business, were also opened to the girl students.

64 Sri Prakasa 'The Education of Women', in *The Commonwealth*, 17 November, 1916, Op.Cit., pp.385-387.

65 *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.2, **TPH.Adyar**, P.114.

Table No.II-3

Table showing the courses of the schools established under National Education⁶⁶

Sl.No.	NATURE OF EDUCATION	YEAR 8. PERIOD EDUCATION	SPECIALISATION OF COURSES
1	Primary	Birth to 7th year	
	a. Birth to 5th years- Horn b. 6th to 7th years Primary		
	Primary	7th to 14th	<p>A sound general education. It should be balance between Theoretical and Practical instruction without specialisation closed by a certificate examination.</p> <p>1. 15-16 High School either completing the school course or leading to the University of various types:</p> <p>(a) Ordinary High School practical department offering various alternative subjects according to the career chosen by the</p> <p>(b) Technical High School, School of Agriculture Trade Business etc.</p> <p>2. 17 years in a preparatory Class for admission to the University at the end of which there is an entrance examination.</p> <p>3. 18-20 years the university including business and agriculture teaching science, arts, engineering and other departments in appropriate colleges.</p> <p>-- closed by degree examination and leading to post-graduate degree .</p>

Source: National Education for India, in *The Besant Spirit Series* Vol. TPH, Adyar, 1939, pp. 114-115.

⁶⁶ For details see *The Besant Spirit Series*, Op.Cit., Pp. 144-155.

The Board of National Education provided a separate department for village schools. Boys in the neighboring schools were induced to help the villagers and their children to run these schools. It is on record that around Madanapalle, six village schools came up as early as 1918 which were run by the students of the Theosophical High School in Madanapalle.⁶⁷

The Theosophists believed that education should bring out the truth of life irrespective of the subjects taught in the institution, the educative process should help the students to become independent beings and to discover truths on their own.⁶⁸ Annie Besant opined that the Indian students must be trained in a way, that will infuse patriotism and independent thinking among them. To achieve this end, the Theosophists believed that a teacher must be positive, definite, eager, full of ideals and full of endeavour to inspire the students. The great principles of Theosophy as applied to Education were:

- a) the belief that every child is a divine seed and that the teacher's task is to draw forth this divine life into expression.
- b) a belief that in the unity of all life and that child should be helped to recognise this life and forms, and

⁶⁷ K.S.S. Seshan, 'The Role of Theosophical Society in the Promotion of Education' paper presented at seminar on "Educational Progress and Social Change in South India in the 19th and early 20th Centuries" held under the auspices of the department of History, S.V. University, Tirupati on 3, 4 and 5 February, 1981. P.6.

⁶⁸ G.S. Arundale, 'The Ideal of Teacher' in *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.2, Op.Cit., pp.70-71.

- c) a desire to awaken in the child an eagerness to seek the truth and to live in harmony with the one $\text{I}^{\text{f}*}$ with in around him.⁶⁹

In the beginning, many students were attracted and public money was enthusiastically contributed to promote the national education. But the foreign system of education had attained too great a stronghold over the people as a whole, and the refusal of the British Government to cooperate, prevented most parents from sending their sons and daughters to educational institutions which could not help towards the securing of lucrative posts. Hence, there was not much enthusiasm towards National Education in latter years.

Theosophical Education Trust (TET)

With her characteristic vigour and determination and as an ideal educationalist, Dr. Besant founded the Theosophical Educational Trust (TET) in 1913. The objects of the TET were:

1. To establish schools and colleges which shall be open to students to every faith and in which religious instruction shall be an integral part of education.
2. To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the carrying out the above object.⁷⁰

69 Felix Layton, 'The Educational Movement' in *The Theosophist*, Vol.104, No.3, 1982, TPH, Adyar 1982, P.102.

70 Theosophical Educational Trust Reports, Op.Cit., P.8.

The work of the trust during the year of 1916-17 has been classified into three categories. (a)The management of the schools and colleges and hostels attached to them, (b) the encouragement of private efforts in the funding of the management of educational institutions and (c) the propaganda in speech and writing on behalf of the educational ideas and reforms.

By the constant encouragement in the field of education, the TET has established 24 colleges and schools in various places in India. These institutions may be classified into two main groups. (a) Those completely managed by the Trust, for which it was ultimately responsible and (b) those which were simply affiliated to the trust. The Trust also gave advice, guidance and such assistance as may be practical and desired in general management, without assuming financial responsibility of any kind.

Table No.II-4

Table showing the Educational Institutions established by the Trust in various places in India.

S.No	Nature of the Institution	Total No.	Places of establishment
1.	Colleges	3	Madanapalle (University of Madras) Hyderabad (Sindh) National University Benaras (For girls only)
2.	High Schools	9	Bangalore city Bhavanagar Bankipore Benares(Boys) Benares(Girls) Hyderabad(Sindh) Cawnpore Proddatore Madanapalle
3.	Lower Secondary Schools	2	Palni Bangalore City (Industrial)
4.	Higher Elementary Schools	5	Vayalpad (Boys) Tindivanam (Boys) Kumbakonam(Girls) Madura (Girls) Coimbatore(Girls)
5.	Lower Elementary Schools	7	Vayalpad(Girls), Lalgudi (Girls) Madanapalle(Boys), Komanapalli (mixed), Corakapur(Girls), Pippareddipalle(mixed), Chippili (mixed)
6.	Sanskrit School	1	Bellary
7.	Panchama Schools	7	(Five) Schools in Madras (one) School in Madanapalle (one) School in Nellore.

Source: *The Theosophical Educational Trust Reports, 1977, TPH, Adyar, 1918, Pp.7-9.*

The above table clearly shows that Theosophical Society gave more emphasis to basic education to all the students under a specified age and this was in strict accordance with the objectives of Theosophical education. For example, out of thirty four institutions in the table, thirty one belong to the category of schools of various types and the rest are colleges. These institutions were spread over the entire sub-continent and this is a proof to the commitment of the Theosophy to the cause of education for Indians. As already stated in the objectives of Theosophical education, equal weightage was given to scientific teaching along with moral education. The significant aspect as suggested by the table is that the leaders of the Theosophical society realised the importance of education to the down-trodden sections of Hindu Society. This is proved by the fact that seven schools were opened for panchamas at Madras, Madanapalle and Nellore. Thus Theosophical society became a fore-runner to Gandhi who in the post-1920 period laid great emphasis on Harijan upliftment. In fact, educational activities of Theosophical Society could draw into its fold many people including commoners and perhaps such a popular base was responsible for the success of Home-Rule movement under the leadership of Dr. Annie Besant.

Table No.II-5
Northern - Madras Group

SI No	Name of the Institution	No.of Insts.	Year Estt.	Place	Number of			
					Boys	Girls	Graduate Teachers.	Other Teachers
1.	The Theosophical College and High School	2	1987	Madanapalle	487	1	14	18
2.	The Theosophical Elementary School	1	1887	Madanapalle	163		—	7
3.	The Sanmarga Free Sanskrit School	1	1889	Ballery	24	8	--	1
4.	The P.V.C.Higher Elementary School	1	1895	Vayalpad	187		—	9
5.	The N.P.R.Theosophical Girls School	1	1895	Vayalpad	—	83	—	4
6.	The National High School	1	1904	Produittur	334	--	7	11
7.	The Olcott Panchama School	1	1914	Madanapalle	18	2	—	2
8.	The Night School	3	1917	Madanapalle	137	35	--	14
9.	The National Preparatory Classes	1	1917	Madanapalle	7		7	6
10	Dr.English Panchama School	1	--	Nellore	10	9	--	1

Sources: The *Theosophical Trust Reports*, 1917, TPH, Adyar 1918, p.7.

Table No.II-6
Southern - Madras Group

S. No	Name of the institution	No. of Insts.	Year Estt.	P lace	Number of			
					Boys	Girls	Graduate Teachers.	Other Teachers
1.	The Olcott Panchama School	5	1894	Madras	526	179	—	32
2.	The Hindu Girls School	1	1899	Lallgudi	--	70	--	3
3.	The Higher Grade Elementary School	1	1902	Tindivanam	161	6	1	9
4.	Sri Meenakshi Vidhyashala	1	1904	Madura	--	342	--	12
5.	The Marana Gounder Theosophical Girls High School	1	1906	Coimbatore		380	1	7
6.	Sri Saraswathi Patashala	1	1908	Kumbakonam	3	172	1	11
7.	The Sri Dandapani National Secondary School	1	1914	Palani	159	3	1	6

Source: *Theosophical Educational Trust Reports*, 1917, TPH, Adyar, 1919, p.8.

Table No.II-7
Mysoure Group

Sl	Name of the Institution	No. of Insts.	Year Estt.	Place	Number of			
					Boys	Girls	Graduate Teachers.	Other Teachers
1.	The S.L.N. Dharma Patashala	1	1906	Bengal ore city	358		1	16
2.	The S.L.N. National School	1	1917	Bengal ore	202	--	6	1

Table II-8
North-Western Group

Sl No	Name of the Institution	No. of Insts.	Year Estt.	Place	Number of			
					Boys	Girls	Graduate Teachers.	Other Teachers
1.	The Sindh National High School	2	1905	Hyderabad (Sindh)	52		5	4
2.	The Sanatana Dharma High School	1	1917	Bhavanagar	585	--	5	18

Table No.II-9
North Eastern Group

sl. No	Name of the Institution	No. of Insts.	Year Estt.	Place	Number of			
					Boys	Girls	Graduate Teachers.	Other Teachers
1.	The Ango Sanskrit School	1	1895	Bankipore (Sindh)	590	--	7	16
2.	The Theosophical Girls' High School	1	1913	Benares		85	1	19
3.	The Theosophical Collegiate Boy's School	1	1913	Benaras	216	--	4	14
4.	The Theosophical High School	1	1914	Cawnpore	245		8	14
5.	The Theosophical Girls' High School	1	1916	Benares		7	3	1
6.	The Theosophical Girls' School	1		Gorakhpore		104	1	6

Source: *Theosophical Educational Trust, 1917*, TPH, Adyar, 1918, p.9.

The above tables shows that the educational institutions started by the Theosophical Educational Trust have been classified into various regional groups like North-Eastern, North Madras, South-Madras, Mysore and North Western groups. In the North-Eastern group six schools were established between 1895 and 1916 at places like **Bakimpore**, Gorakhpur, Benares and Kanpur. In Madras group (both North and South) eighteen schools were established between 1887 and 1917. Such schools were initially established at Madanapalle in 1887 and later it was followed by other places like Ballery, Madras, **Vayalpad**, **Lalgudi**, Tindivanam, Madura,

Proddutore, Coimbatore, Kumbakonam and Palani. In the Mysore group two schools were established between 1905 and 1907. In North Western group like Hyderabad (Sindh) and Bhavanagar two schools were established between 1905 and 1917.

In these schools and colleges, there were more than 6,020 students including 4,534 boys and 1,486 girls taught by 312 teachers of whom 66 were graduates of Universities.

The Theosophical College, Madanapalle:

In 1914, the Theosophical Educational Trust wanted to upgrade the school in Madanapalle into a college and applied to the University of Madras for affiliation. At the invitation of Dr. Annie Besant, Lord Pentland, the then Governor of Madras came and formally opened the Theosophical College on 19 July 1915.⁷¹ It was the first college for the whole of Rayalaseema area. Many students came to this college from various places.⁷² Thus the Theosophical College in Madanapalle became a

⁷¹ The College was formally opened by Lord Pentland, who wrote "I gladly received here the pleasure and interest with which I have this morning seen some thing of this High School and College, and good work which it is doing in healthy and attractive surroundings."

For details: *TET Reports* 1916, Op.Cit, P.8.

⁷² The students came to the institution from various places like Madanapalle and surroundings like Chittoor, Ananthapur, Gooty, Bellary, Hospet, Cuddapah, Nellore, Kurnool, Madras, Proddutore, Changhaipt, Conjeveran, Tanjore, Trichinapally, Tinnively, Salem, Coimbatore, South-Arcot, Palghat, Malabar Dist, Ramnad Gudavali, Madura, North Arcot, Vellore, Connor, Krishna District, Guntur, Mysore, Bengalore Coorg, Travancore, Podukotta, Hyderabad State, Burma, Bombay, Ceylon, The United Provinces.

For details: *TET Reports* 1916, Op. Cit., P.8

nucleus in education. The religious instruction was the main plank of education, which was imparted by members of the respective faiths. The Sanatana Dharma Text Book used for Hindu, the Koran for Mahummadans and Universal Text Book for religions in general. Shorthand, Type Writing, Book-keeping commercial correspondence and commercial geography were taught in High school department.

The students of Madanapalle college have organised many associations.⁷³ The Ladies Association was started by Mrs. Cousins. Many ladies met every week for learning English and social-gathering. Members of the social service league was to educate the people in sanitation, general education and religious subjects.

In 1917 preparatory college classes to be affiliated as the first college of the National University came into being. A provisional programme was drawn up for a four year's course. In the first year's course Religion and Physical instruction were both compulsory subjects.⁷⁴ As the

73 They are many associations such as the Teachers Association, the Youngmen's Mutual Improvement Society (both Senior and Junior). The education Society, The Tamil Sangham, The Telugu Literacy Union, The Athletic Association, The Bajana Class, The Student Group, The Malayali Club, The Olcott Manuscript Magazine, The Andhra Association, The Social Service League, The Students Convention Association, The Ladies Improvement Association and the Gaourds of Honour.

For details: *TET Reports* 1916, Op.Cit., P.9.

74 At the preliminary meeting of about thirty professors and educationists held at the Trust Headquarters and a provisional programme was drawn up for a four years college course in two sections. The first being a one year general course (Partly

ideal of Theosophical education, India's past and the future which that past foreshadows cannot be known without the knowledge of religion. Then, it is well known that most young people know little of their mother-tongue. No National life is possible without the knowledge of one's mother-tongue, because the spirit of the race lives in it. In order that India may do her duty to Empire, English will be taught as an essential subject. It was hoped that a study of English may help her to take advantage of such elements of western civilization, as may assist her growth. The most important compulsory subject was general Economics and Civics. The course in Economics included both History and Geography and was aimed at acquainting the students with the material conditions and needs of the country. Civics included elementary citizenship both theoretical and practical. The aim of the course was to give practical instruction to enable those who pass through it successfully to be more useful and more prosperous citizens. The various optional (subjects) groups would lead to degrees of Indian National University for three years courses. The following branches have been included: 1. Mathematics, 2. Physics, 3. Chemistry, 4. Architecture, 5. Botany, 6. Agriculture, 7. English language and literature, 8. History with special reference to India, 9. Philosophy with special reference to Indian Philosophy,

compulsory party optional) the second being specialised. The 77 students joined for First year course which was held separately from the regular college courses preparing for the Madras University Examinations. The First year general course was as follows:

1. Religion, 2. Physical Instruction, Theoretical and Practical,
3. An Indian Language (The Mother tongue of the pupil, 4. English, 5. General Economics and Civics with special reference to India.

10.Economics and Political Science, 11. Sanskrit, 12. Commerce, 13.Teaching. In all the courses English composition was an additional subject. All the above subjects were taught to students by an experienced and qualified faculty.

The main intention of the National cause to introduce these institutions was to attract and encourage an increasing number of students from every part of India. But not to diminish interest in the recognised school and college. The Governing Body of the Institution consisted of five members. They were Dr. Annie Besant, Ernest Wood, C.S. Trilokekar, James. H. Cousins and R.Giri Rao.

Madanapalle High School:

The credit of establishing of regular school for the first time in Madanapalle town goes to Mr. C. Murugesu Mudaliar. In 1878 he started an elementary school up to III class. In the same year, the Government decided to transfer all secondary schools to local boards or private bodies.⁷⁵ Hence, in 1884 this school was handed over to the Local Board and in 1887 was raised to the status of a High School with Mr. V. Ramanuja Rao, B.A., the Head Master of the School, and succeeded by Mr. Rayachoti Giri Rao as Head Master of the School on August 2, 1887.⁷⁶ In the mean time , a few citizens of the town had started the Town High School, In 1888 the Congress workers in Madanapalle decided to start a 'Congress

⁷⁵ K.S.S. Seshan, 'A Study of the History of Madanapalle,' in *Itihas*, Vol.11, July to December, 1979, P.86.

⁷⁶ Madanapalle *School Records*, Madanapalle.

High School to commemorate the great success of the Indian National Congress, the meeting of which was held in Madras that year. The Broad School was closed down and the buildings were given to the Town High School. All the teachers and students joined the Congress School. Thus the Congress School was established on 13th March 1888.⁷⁷ This Congress School might be regarded as the real parent institution of the present Giri Rao Theosophical High School and the Besant Theosophical College.

With the intervention of Mr. J.N. Atkinson, the Sub-Collector, the two schools, the Congress School and the Town School got amalgamated into one and named in 1891 as the 'Town Congress High School'. In 1892 the school was named as 'Madanapalle High School' on the amalgamation of the Mission School which was started in the previous year. Mr. Giri Rao, the Head Master himself was an ardent Theosophist, kept close contacts with Theosophical Movement.

Dr. Annie Besant herself paid a visit to Madanapalle. She was very much impressed by the work of Mr. Giri Rao and his school.⁷⁸ By 1913,

⁷⁷ *Congress High School Records*, Madanapalle.

⁷⁸ Dr. Annie Besant herself paid a visit to Madanapalle on 22nd August 1910. She 'Witnessed her opinion on school and work of Giri Rao. She wrote in the Visitor Book as follows:

"The school was out of session during my visit to Madanapalle, but I have long known it in its relation to the Central Hindu College, Benaras. Regarding the training of Character is more vital for national welfare than even the training here given. I have just laid the foundation stone of the new Laboratory a necessary adjunct to every High School, a trust that funds for its due equipment may be generally given. Mr. Giri Rao has long laboured for this school and his good work deserves every encouragement."

the Theosophical Educational Trust was founded and the School in Madanapalle was entrusted to the new trust from the 17 June, 1913.⁷⁹ The school consisted of seven classes and its strength on the 1 April 1913 was 170. It rose to 185 by 1 April 1914 and the strength has reached by 31 March 1915 to 265.

Table No.11-10

The following table showed the strength of the each class.

S.No.	Class	1 April 1913	1 April 1914	31 March 1915
1.	I	23	34	64
2.	II	33	22	27
3.	III	28	25	32
4.	IV	21	21	33
5.	IV	28	40	43
6.	V	21	20	21
7.	VI	16	23	35

Source: *Madanapalle School Records*, Madanapalle.

Most of the students who came to the school were from Madanapalle Taluk and also from distant places like Chittor, Nellore, Ananthapur Bellary, Mysore, Bangalore, Kurnool, Cuddapah, Hyderabad, Madras, Tanjore, Coimbatore and Bombay. Various languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Marathi were taught in this school. Elementary Text books on Sanatana Dharma and catechism were used for religious instruction. The school work daily began and ended with prayer.

⁷⁹ K.S.S. Seshan, "Shanti Niketan of South", *The Sunday Statesman*, Calcutta, 18 June, 1995, p. 7.

The Olcott Panchama School-Madanapalle:

The Olcott Panchama School opened with prayer and the religious instruction was based on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The School strength consisted of 20, with 18 Boys and 2 Girls. One of the chief features of the school was the instruction of the shoe and sandal making which was newly introduced in this school.

Table No. 11-11

S.No	Name of the School	Year estab-lished	Place	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
1.	The Krishna Night School	1917	Pippareddi palle	45	4	49
2.	The Raja Night School	1917	Chippili	50	19	69
3.	The Vasanta Night School	1917	Kamapalle	50	12	62
			Total	145	35	180

Source: *Theosophical Education Trust Report 1917*, Op.Cit., pp.17-18.

The above three schools worked on voluntary basis with the students of the Madnapalle school and college under the direction of MR.Ry. D. Raja Gopalachariar. The youth were trained in true education, true human knowledge and experience. These schools were provided with lamps. In addition, they were taught in three R's [Reading, Writing, Arithmetic] sanitation, hyzine and general science. These schools stood as example for others in makingthem unselfish and good citizens.

The P.V.C. High School:

The P.V.C. High Grade Elementary School was established in Vayalpad, Chittoor district. The school had a strength of 187 all boys. The range of teaching was from classes I to VII catechism in Telugu and English were used as the foundation for religious instruction course from standard II to VII. The correspondent held occasional meetings with teachers for the study of ideas in 'Education as Service'. There were Literacy Union, History Association etc. in the school.

The National High School:

The National High School functioned in Proddatur, Cuddupah District. The number of students were 334, all boys. The range of teaching classes IV to V and Form I to VI. The school had good library containing about 400 volumes. The day's work began and ended with prayer in Sanskrit, Telugu and Urdu. Hinduism was taught to Hindu boys and separate classes were held for religious instruction to the Muslims. All religious festivals were celebrated. Twenty students were learning Sanskrit. For the need of the youth, the training classes had been opened in shorthand, typewriting, commercial correspondence, commercial-geography and banking. Arrangements were made in local press to allow, some of the students to learn printing. There were two library associations for Juniors of III and IV forms and seniors for V and VI forms. All the faculty members were selected by the Head-Master and they were all Theosophists. A small monthly magazine was conducted by the boys of the school under guidance of Teachers.

The Sanmarga Free Sanskrit School, Bellary:

The Sanmarga Free Sanskrit School at Bellary had a total strength of 32, of which there were 24 boys and 8 girls. The range of teaching was Elementary. This was the only recognised Advanced Sanskrit School in the ceded districts. Religious teaching was mainly instruction in education. This school was situated in the Theosophical Lodge.⁸⁰

The Olcott Panchama School soon grew into a higher elementary school. The students were interested in the three R's and other allied subjects like spinning, weaving, mat-weaving, cot-tape weaving and palm-leaf work. A course in handicrafts was compulsory for the classes IV, V and VI. Mid-day-meal programme was continued and financial assistance was arranged for poor students.⁸¹ The H.P.B. Memorial School at Kodambakam in Madras provided mid-day-meal and free clothing to the very poor apart from distributing books, slates etc.⁸²

⁸⁰ TET Reports, 1917, Op.Cit., pp. 19-25.

⁸¹ The District Educational Officer paid a visit and remarked about this school that : "the school is doing good work in the cause of 'Adi-dravida' education. The children are well cared and happy and cheerful. Bathing combing, provision of mid-day-meal etc., from regular routine work of this institution".

For details, See, *55th Annual Report of the Theosophical Society-1930*, TPH, Adyar, May 1931, Pp. 148-149.

⁸² The Deputy Inspecting Officer remarked that "the attendance is full, the syllabus and time tables have been carefully drawn up and closely followed. The hand and eye training given is of a high order. The discipline and time of the school continues to be excellent and Head Master and Staff deserve credit for their enthusiastic work. Another feature of this school is provision of mid-day-meal. Children are also given their daily bath under supervision of the teachers. The institution provided books, slates, clothes for poor pupils.

These schools were maintained on the specified lines of the principles of Theosophy. By 1930 there were 520 students under instruction in the above schools.

The figures in the following table speak how the Theosophical education could attract the attention of the parents in sending their children to these schools. The strength of the girl students was also considerable. The number of the students sent to these two schools is only an indication of the successful working of the educational institutions that were established and maintained by the Theosophical society.

Table No.11-12

Table showing the number of pupils attending the two schools in the year 1930.

S.No.	Class	OLCOTT FREE SCHOOL		HPB MEMORIAL SCHOOL		TOTAL	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1.	Kindergarten	42	25	45	23	87	48
2.	I Standard	38	17	34	16	72	33
3.	I I Standard	36	12	24	6	60	18
4.	I I I Standard	45	19	23	2	68	21
5.	IV Standard	37	5	24	3	61	8
6.	V Standard	22	1	8		30	
7.	VI Standard	13				13	
	Total	233	79	158	50	391	129
Grand Total		312		208		520	

Source: *55th Annual General Report of the Theosophical Society for 1931*, Adyar, Madras, Pp. 148-151.

For details, See *55th Annual Report of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., pp. 148-149.

National University:

The crowning achievement of Dr. Annie Besant in the field of Education was the establishment of the University education in India. As she felt that the first ideal of National University is that service to the motherland and to the training of national character. The next great ideal is that it must be a centre of an all-round culture for the nation. The National University must be a centre of research and be a centre of men trained to develop knowledge. Dr. Annie Besant opined that the National University should set a standard of education by its own methods and to encourage it on good lines. It was her desire to prepare them for the heavy burden of national responsibility and to make them strong physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.⁸³

The Chief educational want of India according to her was colleges on national lines and under national control, which should make it their one duty to train up pious, honorable, brave and cultured Indians, loyal to their motherland. To fulfill this end, the boys should grow up through their school and college life in an atmosphere of pure and passionate patriotism, full of pride in their country and full of aspiration for her service. For this high spirit, the boys must be trained and disciplined but never broken; love and not fear must be the root of their obedience, and trust not terror must characterize their

⁸³ Dr. Annie Besant delivered a lecture on 'the Place of the University in National Reform' at the Gokhale Hall in Madras.

For details: I March, 1918, New India, in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*. Op.Cit., P.444.

attitude to their teachers. They must realize that their work is to train citizens for a Free India, not clerks whose value lies in their servility, and whose aim is to become petty tyrants in their turn.

Dr. Annie Besant strongly opined that present generation of lads was splendid material, but mostly uncared for, hated and unloved by their teachers, in the schools. "Their budding patriotism is treated as sedation their self-respect as insubordination, their high spirits as rebellion; their national heroes must be worshiped in secret, and the national patriots which should long in their class-rooms, must be hidden away in their boxes. Their high spirits, their daring, their pride, their sensitivity, dignity, were the jewels of a free nation, though dreaded by the authorities over a subject people. Indian students should be as free in India as English boys are free in England".⁸⁴

To achieve national education in India she was keenly interested on morality based on religion and wanted that it must be an integral part of education. Patriotism must be nourished by Indian History, by national songs and by observing the national festivals. The council must outline an Indian Scheme of Education for Indian Boys and scientific and technical, commercial and industrial training were the life-blood of national prosperity.

Dr. Annie Besant launched a plan for a Central University. The scheme was proposed in 1910 with cooperation of the educationalist like

84 Annie Besant's article '**National Colleges**' in *The Theosophical Educational Trust Report* 1916, TPH, Adyar 1917, pp.61-62.

G.S. Arundale, C.S. Trilokekar Bhagawan Das and others.⁸⁵ The Board of Trustees including Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya a great patriot and orator, S. Subramaniya Iyer of Madras and others. The Chief objectives and aims were as follows:

1. The most marked speciality of the proposed University will lie in the fact that it will officiate no college in which religion and morality do not form an integral part of the education given. It will make no distinctions between religions, accepting equally of Hindu, Buddhist, Parsi, Christian and Muhammadan, but it will not affiliate any purely secular institution. It will draw together all the elements which regard the training of youth in honour and virtue as the most essential part of education. It will be nursery of good citizens instead of only a mint for hallmarking a certain standard of knowledge.
2. The second important speciality was the placing in the first rank of Indian Philosophy, History and Literature and classical languages of India, the chief means of culture. While western thought will be amply studied, Eastern thought will take the lead, and Western knowledge will be used to enrich but not to distort or to cripple, the expanding of the national life.

⁸⁵ When Dr. Annie Besant launched a plan for a Central University in 1910, a scheme was proposed and aided by the Broad of Trustees including Pandit Madan Mohan Maliviya, S. Subramanya Iyer, Madras, Nary ana Chandaraker, Bombay, Ashutosh Mukerji, Calcutta, P.C. Chatterji, Lahore, S. Sinha, Bankinapore, A. Hydari, Hyderabad (Deccan) Govinda Das, Beneras City, B. Cowasjee, Rangoon, (Burma) N.D. Khandalawala, Poona, Pratap Singh Kapurthala, Hirendranath Datta, Calcutta, D.B. Jayatilaka, Ceylon, Syed Hassan Imam, Bankipur, Mazharul Haq, Bankipur, Lala Sultan Singh, Delhi, Ganga Prasad Verma Lvekhan, and Shyan Sundar Lai, Gwalior. A petition supported by the Viceroy was submitted to His Majesty, the King of England for founding a new type of university.

For details, see, C.P. Rama Swamy Iyer, *Annie Besant*, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broad Casting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1963. pp.61-63.

3. The Third important speciality was the paying of special attention to manual and technical training to science applied to agriculture and manufactures, and to Indian arts and crafts, so as to revive these now decaying - industries while bringing from the west all that can usefully be assimilated for the increasing of national prosperity.
4. It was the aim, that the proposed University will try to promote the educational interests of everyone in the country and the University itself will be known as "University of India".

In order to achieve her educational ideas, Dr. Annie Besant set up Society for the promotion of National Education (SPNE) in 1916.⁸⁶ The major contribution of Dr. Besant in the field of education was the establishment of National University in Madras in 1918. It was organised

⁸⁶ The Society for the Promotion of National Education (SPNE) was established in 1916. The objectives for which the society was established were:

1. To establish Universities, colleges and Schools under National Control, which shall be open on equal terms to students of every faith, and in which instruction in his or her own faith shall be an integral part of education, unless the student be withdrawn therefrom by his parent or guardian
2. To establish institutions for research, and for medical, industrial, commercial, commercial agricultural and other technical and vocational training, with dispensaries, hospitals, work shops farms and any other conveniences necessary for the same.
3. To establish Training Colleges for Teachers, Libraries, Museums, Clinics, Hostels, Gymnasias, etc.
4. To affiliate any educational institutions or organisations under Indian control, pursuing similar objects or any of them, on terms to be arranged between the Governing Body of the Society or its Executive and the local committee.
5. To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the carrying out of the above objects.

For details see: *The Theosophical Educational Trust Reports*, 1916, Op. Cit., Pp.63-64.

by the SPNE. A number of Theosophical Institutions like the National Women's College, Benaras, The National College in Hyderabad (Sindh) now in Pakistan, wood National College in Madanapalle, the College of Agriculture and Commerce and also the Training College at Madras were affiliated to the new National University⁸⁷ Ravindranath Tagore was the Chancellor of this University which breathed the spirit of Nationalism.⁸⁸

Dr. Annie Besant pleaded for National University rather than denominational University. She never suggested that a University be built by Hindus for Hindus, another by Muslims for Muslims and another perhaps by Parsis for Parsis. She was in favour of National University that should unite all of them together.⁸⁹

Dr. Annie Besant's idea of National University consisted of three important features. In the first place she wanted that the University should breath Indian spirit when the western system was the order of the day and that scientific education should be taught to Indian Youth. The second feature was that the religious education should form an integral part of the curriculum. She never meant by this teaching one religion to

⁸⁷ K.S.S. Sheshan, Op. Cit., P.8.

⁸⁸ The Gurudev Ravindranath Tagore visited Madanapalle on 25 February 1919. He translated his 'Janaganamana' into English as 'the Morning Song of India'. He also taught the exact way of singing it which today is our National Anthem. For details: See, K.S.S. Sheshan, "A study of the History of Madanapalle", in *Itihas*, Vol.11, July to December 1979, P.89.

⁸⁹ New India 1918, (reprinted) in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., P.444.

all, but teaching Hinduism to Hindus, Christianity to Christians, Islam to Muslim and so on. The Third point was that education should train students for individual success and for the prosperity of the country.

The Theosophical education, as discussed in the foregoing pages was introduced in India at a time when the British system of education was deeply entrenched in Indian Government. Along with it western religious ethics also were introduced to which there was an immense opposition from indigenous society. Though it cannot be denied that people received benefits from British system of education, new English education was introduced under the extraneous influences of the colonial needs. Accordingly, the content and form were devised and Indians were instructed in the same.

Theosophical education was devoted to the overall development of a student based on various subjects and religious principles as enshrined in the established world religions, like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. A few significant aspects stand out from a study of Theosophical education.

Theosophical education was not conceived as a mode of cultural dominance as in the case of the colonial English Education. This is primarily because of the nature of these two western institutions. Colonial rule operated from political and economic platform; hence it was a historical inevitability for them to mould every new policy in India into a mould of colonial dominance. The new economic and educational policies and their functional aspects bear out this facet.

Theosophy in India never aimed at achieving political prominence in the country. Its basic tenets do not have any scope for any dominant tendency within the Theosophical movement. It propagated universal brotherhood and human values.

Its educational system came to be guided more by Hindu traditional values since the country was overwhelmingly populated by members belonging to Hindu faith. Added to this, there was immense opposition to the activities of Christian missionary societies in India as far as the field of education was concerned. It was therefore imperative that the Theosophical education was modelled on the noble principles of Hindu faith. It can be further seen that it has been an interesting synthesis of western form and Indian thought. While it adopted the western model of English education, it deviated from the British colonial education in so far as it included subjects like science, environment, physical training and moral science based on the enlightened principles of Hindu faith. Moreover, it equally encouraged the study of other religious faiths in its educational institutions. As already said, the British education had always an eye on proselytisation which was successfully undertaken by Christian missionary societies. In fact, such a blind religious zeal was absent in Theosophical education. It is a historical fallacy to describe Theosophy as revivalist in nature in so far as we consider it in the field of education. From our study of various aspects of Theosophical education, it can be said that the application of the phrase of 'revivalist movement'¹ to Theosophy is a historical misnomer at least in terms of its activities in the field of education.

The establishment of exclusive schools for lower castes is a unique feature of education under Theosophy. Such schools were founded in Madras, Madanapalle and Nellore. The educational institutions under the control of Christian missionary societies were bent upon converting to Christianity and most often these institutions remained as centres of proselytisation. The Theosophical educational institutions did not work with this kind of view and there was a humanitarian zeal in promoting the spread of knowledge among the most ignored sections in the Indian society. It is not an exaggeration to say that the need to develop these sections was for the first time, sympathetically considered by Theosophy and while doing so it had no ulterior motives on its agenda.

The spread of Theosophical education was rather slow since it was introduced very late i.e., by the end of the 19th century. By the time it began its work, the new English education of the British government was making rapid strides in Indian Society. Theosophical educational institutions could not cope up with the vigorous spread of colonial education.

Theosophical educational institutions most often depended on their own or on generous contributions from society. Other institutions that have been promoted by colonial government and Christian missionaries were supported by liberal grants in the form of grants-in-aid system. They were managed by a well established system of educational administration under the British government. Whereas, the Theosophical institutions did not receive any grants on large scale and they often remained isolated

schools or colleges without proper help except from the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras.

The social composition of the Theosophical educational institutions remained weak and confined to upper castes in Indian society. By late 19th century, most of the people were sending their children to the schools and colleges under the colonial government. They were doing so with an eye on immediate employment in British administration. The Theosophical education with its emphasis on Indian traditions and noble principles of Hindu faith could attract people from those sections of society which were opposed to missionary activities. Incidentally, these sections happened to be orthodox upper castes in the society. Though there have been lofty principles and universal ideas on the agenda of Theosophical education, it finally came to consist of more upper caste and orthodox elements in its institutions. The absence of mass-base can be said as responsible for the slow spread of Theosophical institutions.

By early decades of 20th century Theosophical Society was basically engaged in Home Rule Movement under the leadership of Dr. Annie Besant. During the active period of the movement all the energies have been diverted towards this end. As a result, Theosophical Society was not able to concentrate much on the promotion of Theosophical education and this was more or less confined to Theosophical lodges established in various parts of India. The death of Annie Besant in 1933 led to the consequent decline of Theosophical Movement. Along with it, all other activities of the Theosophical Society began to show signs of definite decline.

The experiment of Theosophical education was very significant since it could provide an alternative to missionary-dominated English schools. As a new faith in India, Theosophy was ahead of its times in including modern subjects like science', technical education and awareness about environment in the four-fold system of education designed by Annie Besant. It did not confine itself to the traditional learning methods of Indian society though it promoted Hindu faith. In short, Theosophical education was devoted to develop a complete human being, endowed with material knowledge and moral behaviour.

CHAPTER - III
ROLE IN INDIAN POLITICS

Dr. Annie Besant much before she arrived in India, had already won public recognition as a great leader in the west and other parts of the world, by her outstanding oratorical gifts, her numerous writings on religious, social, philosophical and political work. Her strenuous, active and tireless work in several fields for human freedom and sympathy for low and down-trodden was well known. The fact that her very first public lecture dealt with the political status of women focussed that she stood for equality of rights and duties for all men and women. Her services for India had already begun when she published a book on *England, India and Afghanistan* in 1878. From that period, the first twenty years of her life in India between 1893 and 1913, she did relentless work in various fields like education, religion and society.

When Dr. Annie Besant came to India, she did not at once enter into the political field. She expounded one religion after another emphasizing the common unity of faith and aspiration. In India, when religion degenerated into fanaticism with its concomitant bloodshed, Dr. Annie Besant's first work was to make fanaticism impossible. Her next work was to put education upon a religious basis. That impulse she gave has influenced hundreds of schools to make religious teaching and spirituality as an integral part in education. Apart from her religious and

educational work, Dr. Besant has also turned into the reform of social abuses such as child marriages, the extortion of bride-monies etc. She pleaded for removing age-old social customs.

At the call of liberty and freedom, she ranged herself alongside the people of India in their struggle for freedom, which she directed with her trust, ability and capacity to lead the Indian society. She gave her experience, energy and wonderful power of tongue and pen for upliftment of the society. Dr. Besant made her speeches on behalf of women suffrage in England during 1913-14. She fought for the betterment of living conditions and questions of the day at Trafalgar Square in London. Already in the realms of religion, education and social life, Dr. Besant had been recalling to activity the very soul of India. In the realm of politics she knew that she must call to activity the magnificent political virtue of this soul, with all its wonderful democratic principles and perfect adjustment of power to capacity and responsibility.

From the beginning of her public career, Dr. Besant had been a Home Ruler, whether in the case of Ireland or South-Africa or India. She had been a passionate opponent of all injustice to weaker nations. She was always in opposition to the Government of the day.¹ Against England's aggressive and oppressive policy in Ireland, in the Transvaal, in Afghanistan, in Burma and in India, she lifted up her voice trying to

¹ Krishnadasa article in *Annie Besant* (Servant of Humanity) Spl.Number, *New India*, Madras, 25 August, 1924. P. 16.

touch the consciousness of the English people and to make them feel the immorality of a land and practical policy. She has been always denounced as an agitator and a firebrand. Dr. Besant preached against War, against capital punishment and flogging. She demanded national education instead of big guns, and public libraries instead of warships. Her first entry into politics was due to her intense sympathy for disabilities and injustices under which her own sex suffered even in England. She has been endeavoured to her ability to guide in politics into healthy channels. Her inexhaustible energy and tireless industry, her alertness and courageous optimism paved the way for carrying constructive work in Indian politics.

The land mark was the beginning of Dr. Annie Besant's mighty political work coinciding with her re-election to the office of president
2
in 1914. During that year she always regarded as the supreme activity of her life, for her claiming of Home Rule for India. Already as far back as 1893, she laid the foundation of Central Hindu College at Benaras, to identified the renaissance of Indian culture for which she worked throughout the length and breadth of India. As Dr. Besant strongly

2 Col. Olcott was the Founder President of the Theosophical Society till he died in 1907. He was succeeded in his office by Dr. Annie Besant. By 5 July, 1914 the results of the presidential election were declared that showed an overwhelming majority for Dr. Besant, for a further period of seven years. Total number of voters was 21,254 among whom 14,983 voted in favour of Dr. Annie Besant and 238 members against her. 3,970 members did not participate in the voting and 63 voters were declared invalid.

For details, See, Josephine Ransom, Op.Cit., P.409.

believed that 'without a widespread religious spirit, without a truly national education, there could be no safe political upliftment' in Indian Society.³

Dr. Annie Besant's participation in Indian politics synchronised with the commencement of the first world war. The Great War had broken out on 4 August, and to that colossal struggle the world began to give its attention, little dreaming that it was to last for four years, and would dislocate all familiar ways and leave the world with a new set of circumstances to adjust itself. Dr. Annie Besant threw in the weight of her opinion on the side of the Allies. She declared afterwards that she knew that the Allies would win, so did not need to throw herself into that problem, but took advantage of the conditions created to press forward for the political emancipation of India while idealism ran high, and India was giving of her utmost in the struggle. So far as the war itself was concerned, she called upon 'all who are pledged to universal brotherhood, all Theosophists the world over, to stand for right against might, law against force, freedom against slavery, brotherhood against tyranny.'⁴ There were objections to these views, and the alienation of some, but she held firmly to them.

³ G.S. Arundale's General remarks of *Autobiography of Annie Besant* Op.Cit., Pp.57-58.

⁴ Josephine Ransome, (compiled)., Op.Cit., P.410.

Dr. Annie Besant's plunge into political struggle in the second decade of 20th century was a new dimension given to her public activities in the country. A critical appreciation of her decision to take recourse to political acts to be achieved what, she believed to be the lawful objectives of the indigenous population, reveals a few interesting points. Dr. Besant's primary objective in India was to strengthen the noble cultural values as embedded in the Indian religious traditions. A free flowering of such traditional morals was hampered by the forceful imposition of western ethical values. In order to give the appearance of legality to their oppressive political force in the country, the colonial government consciously chose to introduce western moral values into Indian society and such a campaign was initiated right from the 19th century. The western notions of morality most often tried their best to generate strong sentiments of obedience and faithfulness to colonial government. A careful look at the contents of the syllabus prescribed by the government to the students under instruction in her public schools as well as the missionary institutions revealing the intentions was not object to the Christian Missionary activities in India also attests this fact. Given this background of very strong cross-cultural influences, the healthy growth of indigenous cultural traditions was adversely affected. A free and fair growth of native values is possible only when the people are ruled by a government which is representative of popular aspirations of the people. It may be one of the strong reasons that would have gooded Annie Besant to take up the cause of Home Rule for India which alone would strengthen her activities in the field of culture and religion in India. She made her intention clear when she openly declared that: 'I have worked for social reform on religious lines; I am still working for all of these,

and in addition for that which alone can make these safe, for Home Rule for India, self-government within the Empire.⁵

Another strong factor of influence of her decision to enter the political arena was her Irish background. Ireland made a very strong case for Home Rule. Annie Besant was brought up in an Irish atmosphere which was dominated by strong sentiments of liberty, freedom of speech and fundamental human rights. She imbibed such liberal traditions during her formative years in Ireland, that she even took active part in the strike organised by the girls of match work industry. She started her journalistic career also in Ireland where she published articles on contemporary social problems. But to her dismay she found that human rights have been ruthlessly suppressed by colonial government. She felt very sorry for the discouraged situation in the country. She further felt that the autocratic British government was responsible for this. On the other hand, the oppressive political power of the British government was a hurdle to her own activities in the field of religion and culture. She became unhappy both with the suppression of civil rights under the British government and the slow pace of her activities due to problems created by the colonial rule. She truly felt that the native population of India have a natural claim over civil rights and this was possible only under a native government. The formation of such government would ultimately facilitate the smooth functioning of cultural practices for which she was

⁵ Annie Besant *The Birth of New India* TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1917, P.439.

making serious efforts. These considerations also provided the necessary background to her decision to take up Home Rule movement in the second decade of 20th century.

Dr. Besant contributed for two great concepts with all progressive forces in the country. They were firstly Home Rule for India, as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and secondly, the principle of self-determination for India.⁶

By its very existence the Theosophical movement had done much for Indian self-confidence. It had treated the colour bar with contempt and it encouraged Indians to respect their religions and literary heritage. Dr. Besant implanted the seeds of self-respect in this land of slaves of government and tradition. Since she came to India, Dr. Besant worked for nation up to 1913 as chiefly divided into religious, educational and social fields. During October and November in 1913, she delivered a series of stirring addresses on social and political reform with the general title of *Wake up India*.⁷ She demanded an end to the petty animosities within India, the reform of child-marriage and the caste system, better rights for Indian women and a revival of the panchayat, the

⁶ B.Shiva Rao's article on 'Dr. Besant as Constructive Statesman' in *Annie Besant Centenary Book*, Op.Cit., P.83.

⁷ C.Jinarajadasa, *The Goldenbook of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., P.117.

self-governing village council.⁸ She encouraged Indian national consciousness, attacked caste and child marriage and worked effectively for Indian Education.

Dr. Besant's political aim was a united India attaining freedom, functioning on a level of equality with all the other nations of the earth, and contributing its share to the progress of the world.⁹ Dr. Besant said that: Claim India's place among the nations'. . . .The end will be a great triumph, take care it is not stained by excess. Liberty for India, but within the British Federation, was the goal for which I was to work. . . . Dominion status gives - Independence within India, with an equal and friendly link with Britain though the crown.¹⁰ Dr. Besant's call for intensified agitation gathered momentum as the First World War broke out in 1914. Britain and France raged against Germany and its allies. For the veteran organiser of agitation by oppressed, and a master tactician who could capitalise on the opponent's difficulties, Britain needed to get the support of India. The British Government appealed to all the Dominions and colonies to help Britain to win the war. In return, the Dominions were promised that after the successful conclusion of the war, there shall be a 'New deal' between Britain and Dominions.

⁸ Rosemary Dinnage, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P. 108.

⁹ N.Sri Ram's article on Dr. Besant, The Statesman in *Annie Besant Centenary Book*, Op.Cit., P. 148.

¹⁰ *The Theosophist*, TPH, Adyar, January 1929, P.341.

However, Britain's open discrimination in the treatment of the white Dominions and India, and also other colonies in Asia and Africa, has convinced Dr. Besant to pursue the demand for self-government for India vigorously. As a brilliant organiser, Dr. Besant brought about a change in the outlook in India's fight for self-rule. She strongly felt that 'strike the iron while it is hot; and make the iron hot by striking on' was the strategy she evolved for the new agitation.¹¹ In anticipation of self-rule for India after the Great War, Dr. Besant extended her support. She strongly felt that 'India shall be recognised as a nation, shall be given self-government, and shall form an integral part of the Empire, composed of self-governing communities. India is willing that the change from foreign autocracy to self-government shall come gradually, but it must come steadily; the aim must be recognised and the progress towards it must be perceptible.'¹²

Dr. Besant clearly stated that:

India does not want to break the link with Britain. She wants to remain part of the Empire, but an equal part, a self-governing Community, standing on a level with the self-governing Dominions. She wants to be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England. To make and unmake Ministries at their will. To carry arms, to

11 Gunturu Venkata Subba Rao, *Dr. Annie Besant* (Biography) (Telugu) Vasantha Institute, Anakapally, 1975, P. 139.

12 Dr. Annie Besant delivered a lecture on 'A Plea for India' at the Christian Commonwealth on 13th May, 1914,

For details, See: Annie Besant, *India and The Empire*, Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1914, Pp. 17-18.

have her own army, her own navy her own volunteers. To levy her own taxes, to make her own budgets, to educate her own people, to irrigate her own lands, to mine her own ores, to mint her own coin, to be a Sovereign Nation within her own boarders, acknowledging the paramount power of the Imperial crown, and sending her soul to the Imperial Council.¹³

Dr. Besant started a weekly news paper, *The Commonweal* in January 1914 to spread political ideas. In July, she purchased *The Madras Standard* and renamed it as *New India*. *The Commonweal* stood for religious and political reform, the latter to deal with the building-up of a complete self-government from village councils upwards to a National Parliament. And also to draw Great Britain and India nearer to each other through better understanding.¹⁴ In her writings, in both the daily and the weekly, Dr. Besant not only roused public opinion to support the self-rule movement, but also showed Indian journalists the technique of writing effective, leading articles denouncing the action of the British authorities in England and in India. In particular she taught them the method of criticism to be strong and forceful based upon facts, and not wild imagination. Her writings became a main stream line of propaganda for India's Freedom. By her series of stirring articles created a new atmosphere and stressed the thinking of nationalists. She argued that : 'we claim liberty, not favour. We claim freedom - not the goodwill of the Government. Freedom is the right of every human being and without the

¹³ Annie Besant; *India:A Nation* (A Plea for Self-government) New India Office, Madras, 1923. Pp.154-155.

¹⁴ *The Commonweal*, 9th January 1914, Op.Cit., P.22.

process of Law none should have the power to take it . . . unless a government is in sympathy with the legitimate aspirations, the legitimate desires of the people, then that Government in the presence of the true justice of God has no right to govern'.¹⁵

The war created a new awakening and self-consciousness among the Indians. It imparted a sense of self-confidence among the Indian people and demonstrated the importance of the British Empire. It thus materially advanced India's claim to self-government. Dr. Besant stood for attaining the self-rule in India. For that, she laboured vigorously for national consciousness. She strongly felt that: "we are a great nation and not a barbarous people. Our culture goes back far into the past. Long before you dreamt of culture in the west, India was a highly civilized trading and prosperous nation. Appeal to your past to justify your hope of the future. . . . That there is no nation neither England nor America nor any of allies nation, you should not be free ... no nation is made free by another nation. It wins its own freedom and by the winning, shows its fitness to be free".¹⁶

¹⁵ Dr. Besant's article in *Annie Besant builder* (Besant Spirit Series) TPH, Adyar, Madras 1942, P.62.

¹⁶ *New India* 1st September, 1918, TPH, Adyar, 1918.

Dr. Besant was also anxious that there should be better relations between the Indians and the English, so that all mutual bitterness might disappear and mutual understanding may lead to mutual esteem and perpetuate in the relationship between the two countries as equal partners in a Commonwealth for the good of all mankind. Dr. Besant gave no special place to the English people themselves, as members of the conquering race, or as persons in administrative authority over the people. She vigorously fought for this equality inculcating friendliness and modesty among those who ruled, and dignity and self-respect among those who were ruled.¹⁷ She opined that 'Indians who have been taught the value of liberty, that taxation without representation, is robbery that Government rests on the will of the people and Indians' demand to be treated as equals and not as a subject race'. Dr. Besant questioned the British empire on social difficulties that the exclusion of Indians from clubs, the insults often offered to them, if they travel first class on railways, the refusal to admit them to railways rest-room at night, that social equality will only come with political equality.¹⁸

Dr. Annie Besant had endeavoured to her ability to guide the activities of the politicians into healthy channels. Her inexhaustible

17 Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P.xxiv.

18 Dr. Besant's article on 'View of Native Grievances to the Editor of The Times, on 29th May, 1914,

See For details, *Annie Besant: India and the Empire*, Op.Cit.,Pp.34-36.

energy and tireless industry, her alertness in physical and mental and her courage for political upliftment in India continued throughout. Dr. Besant had taken active part in political field since 1913. Her method to attain freedom for India was by way of intensive and well organised constitutional agitation.¹⁹ In all her activities, whether in social, educational or political fields her endeavour was to rouse the self respect of the Indians and help the renaissance in India.

Dr. Besant had forced some of the criticisms of her friends on every side after she entered in political field.²⁰ She replied them that . "because, H.P.Balvatsky thought rightly, that under the new conditions into which I entered when I became her pupil in the Divine Wisdom, it was necessary for me to devote myself to the mastering of the Theosophical standpoint, to the adjustment of the focus of the mental and emotional eyes to the new light Socialism to make way for the struggles, the antagonisms, the wars, in which adolescent Nations hewed their ways to individualism and self-reliance. For my old crude views were thrown into the file of silence, and nothing was lost of the gold they contained. . . . to let my tongue speak freely that which had been burning in my heart and to which all led up the Freedom of the motherland, and dignity of an

19 Krishnadasa's article in *Annie Besant* (Servant of Humanity) Spl. Number, Op.Cit., P.5.

20 Josephine Ransome (compiled) *A Short History of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., P.405.

Eastern Nation self-rule". In October 1913 she spoke at a meeting in Madras, pleading for Standing Committee of the House of Commons for considering India might win swaraj or self-rule²²

Dr.Besant had entered the Indian political arena and set the platform for agitational activities through the Madras Session. She joined the Congress to espouse India's demand for self-government. She strongly felt that the Indian National Congress was the only political organisation capable of leading to her cherished goal.²³ She joined the Indian National Congress as a delegate in 1914.²⁴ At this 29th session of Indian National Congress at Madras, one of the chief resolutions was the issue of self-government moved by Surendranath Banerjea and supported by Dr. Annie Besant. ²⁵ The resolution demanded self-government as follows:

21 Josephine Ransome, Op.Cit., Pp.405-406.

22 C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, *Annie Besant.*,Op.Cit., p.65.

23 B.N.Pande (ed). *A Centenary History of the Indian NationalCongress*, Vol.1 (1885-1919), New Delhi, 1985, p.474.

24 The 29th Session of Indian National Congress was held in the grounds of Devotion House at Nungambakkam in Madras during 28th, 29th and 30th December, 1914. The total number of delegates were 866, who came from different places like Madras, Bombay and Sindh, Bengal, U.P., Behar, C.P. Behar, Punjab and Burma. The largest number that had assembled since the 23rd session of INC in Surat in 1907.

See, For details: Annie Besant; *How India Wrought for Freedom*, Op.Cit., P.570

25 Surendra Nath Benerjea moved Resolution X, claiming Self-Government

'to give effect to the Despatch of 25th August, 1911, India would consist of a number of administrators autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them, and possessing powers to interfere in case of Mis-Government'²⁶

Surendra Nath Benerjea asked for the introduction of a federal system of Government, which he argued that:

'India to organise her strength for this movement, and educate her public both in India, and all parts of the world.'

Surendranath Benerjea appealed to Congressmen to formulate a scheme for the purpose. Dr. Besant supported the resolution and exhorted the younger men to practice the art of government in the social bodies.²⁷ It

for India, in clear terms. The resolution read:

"In view of the profound and avowed loyalty that the people of India have manifested in the present crisis, this congress appeals to the Government to deepen and perpetuate it, and make it an enduring and valuable asset of the Empire, by removing all individual distinctions here, and abroad, between his Majesty's Indian and other subjects, by redeeming the pledges of provincial autonomy contained in the Despatch of the 25th August 1911, and by taking several measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of a federated Empire, in the full and the free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status".

See for details: Ibid. Pp.586-587.

²⁶ Ibid, 582.

²⁷ Dr. Besant supported the Resolution for government in Local Bodies that: 'who will be part of the Self-Governing Nation' to practice the science and art of the Government in the Local Bodies ... the drudgery of learning local administration* prepared a man for wider power. Provincial autonomy was a step to complete Self-Government. She then indicated India's worthiness of

was an important session of the Congress and was amply compensated by the presence and significant role of Dr. Besant. Apart from this, Dr. Besant moved the Resolution VIII i.e., on Reciprocity between India and the colonies. The resolution was as follows:

...."India does not chaffer with the blood of her sons and the proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much liberty, so much right. India claims the right as a Nation, to justice among the people of the Empire. India asked for this before war. India asks for it during the war. India will ask for it after the war, but not as a reward but as a right does she ask for it. . . . India is growing in the sense of her own dignity. She is not content to be any longer a child in the nursery of the Empire ... she is showing the responsibility of the man in Europe give her the freedom of the man in India.²⁸

The President of the Congress, Bhupendranath Basu, conveyed thanks to Dr. Besant, for she had brought so much of her wisdom, energy and arduous task. She was henceforth to be a potent factor in the fortunes of the congress and her personality was very closely bond up with the subsequent politics of the country.²⁹ As Pattabhi Sitaramaiah wrote in his book, *The History of Indian National Congress*:

...."She brought new ideas, new talents, new resources and altogether a new method of organisation

freedom, and asked Congress to formulate a definite scheme of Self-Government, to present to England after the war.

See, For details: Annie Besant; *How India Wrought for Freedom*, Op.Cit., Pp.582-583.

28 Ibid. Pp. 580-581.

29 Bhogaraju Pattabi Sitaramaiah, *The History of Congress(1885-1935)* Madras. 1935. P.202.

and new outlook into the field of the congress. She was already a great world-character and had millions of followers in the East and West, in the new hemisphere as well as the old . . . with this mighty following and with her inexhaustible energy, she gave a new life to Indian Politics."³⁰

The 29th congress session may be considered significant that Dr. Besant demonstrate India's worthiness for freedom and asked the congress to formulate definite scheme of self-government to present to England after the war. She exercised all her influence on the Congress Committee to deliberate, discuss and formulate the scheme of Self-Government.³¹

Since joining the Congress Dr. Besant had begun to activate the organisation. Dr. Besant's first and foremost aim was to unify the moderates and extremists to a common platform of Congress before the session opened. She wrote in *New India* that;

"If we are to win Home Rule, Union is absolutely necessary; the Right and Left Wings of the National Party are to be United by the Congress".³²

Bala Gangadhar Tilak was released from Mondalaya in June 1914. After his return, he too began to work for Congress unity and with his re-entry into congress, Dr. Besant took the initiative for negotiations³³.

30 B.N. Pande(ed.) Op.Cit., p.452.

31 Ibid.

32 Dr. Besant's article in *New India* 6th, January 1916, Adyar, P. 10.

33 Before the Congress of 1914 a long discussion had been taken which re-united the Indian Political Party, which split into two at Surat in 1907. In autumn of 1914 Gokhale asked Dr. Besant to go to Tilak for joining into one body for India's freedom. Gokhale made the outline of reforms that he had drawn up and

Eminent persons, Journalists and moderate congress leaders like G.Subramanya Iyer, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer and several leaders from North and South asked Dr. Besant to work for unifying both the wings. She proposed an amendment of the congress constitution for the re-entry of the extremist leaders into the congress tent. But her proposal failed on the eve of Madras session of Indian National Congress. It has resulted in the formation of a new organisation known as All India Home Rule League for the self-government. Hence, it became a common platform, both moderates and extremist leaders to attain freedom for India.

Dr. Besant had already entered the Indian political arena and was to set the peace for agitational activities through the Home Rule League. Thus the Madras session was the prologue of the new and epilogue of the old era.³⁴

suggested that Tilak might re-enter the Congress and United India might work for Self-Government within the Empire on "Colonial Lines". Dr. Besant want to see Tilak and had some conversations. Ultimately, they came to an agreement that Tilak came to see Gokhale, and agreed that a 'proposal was drawn up by Gokhale. Their agreement was to open the way for return into the Congress of the extremists'.

For, See details Annie Besant; *The Future of Indian Politics*. TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1922. Pp.68-69.

³⁴ B.N.Pande, (ed). Op.Cit., P.453.

Dr. Besant felt that, India welcomes English cooperation but tired of English domination. That she is determined to get rid of coercive legislation and to enjoy self-government. Dr. Besant clearly explained why India wanted self-government; because:

To rebuild and improve her own system, beginning with Panchayats and working upwards, untrammled by foreign experts. British rule has destroyed her village and council government, and has put in its hybrid system of Boards and Councils. India wants a system of which will develop her resources by supplying scientific experts in every branch wherein applied science is needed, by supplying practical experts in all industries and crafts; a system which will educate her whole population for useful ends'. British rule has destroyed India's Art and Industries in order to favour the importation of cheap foreign goods. India would train her own sons to utilise her vast stores of raw-materials for her own profit, and would only send abroad her surplus. India will improve on irrigation and forestry among the first duties of Government because British Rule has neglected irrigation. India would insist on sanitation as among the first duties of Government, would encourage all that is good in the old system, and utilise what is good in western methods.³⁵

Dr. Besant further added that : "British rule is extremely costly and the English lived on Indian money when they retire to England, it made a huge annual drain. It encourages exploitation of the country by English

³⁵ Annie Besant, *India : A Nation*, (A plea for Indian self-government) New India Office, 1923. Pp.51-53.

companies and English capital, making another drain. It makes India pay for an Indian army, maintained to keep India in subjection, it makes India pay for a costly English establishment, the central autocracy, irresponsible to our parliament. She would have her own Army and Navy, for protection and imperial needs, not to hold her people down. British rule has sustained coercion for improvements in Government. India would sweep all coercive legislation away. She would not be afraid of her people possessing arms; she would not be afraid of the criticism of free speech, free press. She would reform abuses instead of strangling the expression of the discontent which abuses produce; she would emulate British rule in Britain, not British rule in India. India is enthralled and she is determined to be free.³⁶

Home Rule Movement:

Dr. Annie Besant went to Bombay for the 30th session of Indian National Congress to seek permission, and support to senior leaders and All India Congress Committee (AICC) to launch her new political organisation for the purpose of educative and propagandist work throughout the year for self-government or Home Rule for India. Dr. Besant met the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji in Bombay in September, 1915. She secured the permission for the formation of the Home Rule. But the local leaders however did not welcome the idea of Home Rule. They thought

³⁶ Ibid. Pp.51-53.

³⁷ Annie Besant *The Future of Indian Politics*. Op.Cit., P.91.

that it might weaken the congress, whereas the hope was to strengthen it. It was because, the congress showed little activity between its annual sessions that the need for a Home Rule League had arisen. It was to be an active propagandist body to carry on a steady and powerful agitation for Home Rule.³⁸

39

The words 'Home Rule' were for popular cry making the fact that the struggle was not against Great Britain, but for Liberty within the Empire.

Dr. Besant put forward a resolution 'to establish Home Rule League to carry on an educative propaganda throughout the country', at the conference of the Congress and Muslim League on 27th December 1915.⁴⁰ In the same meeting a resolution was adopted to approve the establishment of a League to carry on, educate and fight for self-government in India. But the leadership of the Congress at the Bombay session decided that Congress must itself take up the question of Self-Government for India and popularise it by educative and propagandist work, instead of newly founded

38 Ibid. P.91.

39 '*Home Rule*' the word was popularised by Issac Butt, a Dublin Barrister. He was a champion of Irish self-government, in home affairs. He used the term 'Home Rule' as an election slogan in 1870. He was elected to parliament to lead the Home Rule League in 1871.

See, for Details: *Encyclopedia International*. New York, 1963, p. 496.

40 *New India*, January 6, 1916, TPH, Adyar, P. 10

organisation. The older congressmen were not in favour of a separate body. And advised Dr. Besant to suspend her Home Rule campaign since the Congress itself had decided to undertake the educative propaganda work throughout the year. Dr. Besant was given a dead line up to 31st August 1916. By then, if the Congress had failed to act, the Home Rule League might be launched.⁴¹

Dr. Besant clearly stated that Home Rule Movement was not antagonistic to the congress but was intended to break the static and routine functioning of the congress.

... As regards the suspension of the formation of Home Rule League., the position is really quite clear. I have said from the beginning that it was intended to strengthen, not to weaken the Congress. I further said that ... I would not organise the League if the Indian leaders were against it⁴²

The spirit of compromise being one of her strongest traits, Dr. Besant suspended her proposal, though her followers insisted that she should go ahead with it. Many of those who followed her programme were angry with her for yielding so far to the wishes of the older men, especially as Dadabhai Naoroji had approved the idea.⁴³ But her aim was to unify both the wings of the Congress as well as Hindu and Muslims. In order to achieve her idea she put off her proposal temporarily.

⁴¹ B.N. Pande (ed.) Op.Cit., P.476.

⁴² *New India*, 6th January, 1916, TPH, Adyar, P. 10.

⁴³ Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., P.99.

...The Home Rule League will not be sanctioned this evening. The opportunity of joint action on a common platform between Hindus and Muslims will thus be destroyed. I am, of course, bound by my promise not to start the organisation if the Indian leaders disapprove it, deep as will be the disappointment felt all over the country by taking the rank and file, who have come to the Congress with the object of joining it. They must console themselves with the fact that strength of the delegates in favour of a constitutional agitation to begin at once, and carried on through the year, has forced even the timid to agree to resolution ordering the All India Congress Committee to form a programme for such educative work⁴⁴

Dr. Besant appealed to the Congress to concentrate all its energy and efforts on this one question of Home Rule instead of dissipating them over various resolutions moved again and again in early identical form. She was instrumental in making the Congress adopt, in the Bombay session. The Congress openly accepted self-government as an immediate problem and the need to use its resources and organisation to attain that end. In the words of Dadabhai Naoroji it was "the Home Rule Congress", through its famous resolution on self-government.⁴⁵ Thus the Besant's Home Rule' paved for the resolution on self-government. This was the main political resolution of the session of the Congress.

The *Madras Mail* reported that : 'amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, the speakers being repeatedly cheered notably Hon. Mr. Surendranath Benerjea, Dr. Besant and Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya'.⁴⁶ the Resolution

44 *New India* December, 31, 1915, Adyar, P. 11.

45 B.N. Pande (ed.), *Op.Cit.*, P.459.

46 Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, *Op.Cit.*, P.99.

was as follows:

- a) The Introduction of Provincial Autonomy including financial independence.
- b) Expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils so as to make them truly and adequately representative of all sections of the people and to give them an effective control over the acts of the Executive Government.
- c) The reconstitution of the various existing Executive Councils and the establishment of similar Executive Councils in provinces where they do not exist.
- d) The reform or the abolition of the council of the secretary of State for India.
- e) Establishment of Legislative Councils in provinces where they do not now exist.
- f) The readjustment of the relations between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India; and
- g) A liberal measure of local self-government.

47

The Bombay session of the Congress was highlighted by the Home Rule for India. The main Political resolution of the session was on self-government. This resolution also authorised the AICC to frame a programme of continuous work, education and propaganda. Dr. Besant described the resolution as the most momentous' that had ever been adopted by the Indian National Congress in thirty years.⁴⁸

By the efforts of Dr. Besant the Bombay session had become United Congress for both wings of Indian National Congress Party. Dr. Besant

⁴⁷ Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., P.100.

⁴⁸ B.N. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.460.

observed in *New India* that:

'... A matter of great rejoicing is the closing of the breach between the two wings of the National Party ...
...we shall have a United Congress at Lucknow, the first since the Surat split, the wound has been healed, and what Madras began Bombay has completed. Let us now all work together for the common Motherland, and be rivals only in devotion to her'.⁴⁹

The Bombay Congress was also significant as it marked the beginning of great fraternization, between Hindus and Muslims. Dr. Besant took a prominent role to unify the two forces of Hindus and Muslims.

'... During the short space of three years in the Indian Political field, Dr. Besant secured that which has not since been achieved the Union of the dominant Hindu and Muslim elements and the union of the conflicting Congress elements. Forgotten were differences. India alone was remembered.⁵⁰

At the conference of the All India Muslim League held in 1917, Syed Ali Nabi clearly stated that:

...."I should be untrue to myself, untrue to the Muslim community, untrue to the community at large if I failed at the movement to publicly acknowledge the services rendered by the great and sincere lover of India, Mrs. Annie Besant who was mainly instrumental in bringing about the spirit of unity between the two communities
It was she who made that union possible and we can not be sufficiently grateful to her-"⁵¹

49 *New India*, 31 December, 1915. Adyar, P. 11.

50 *Annie Besant Builder of New India* Besant Spirit Series, TPH, Adyar, 1943, P.249.

51 *Ibid.*, p.249.

Dr. Besant had agreed to defer the inauguration of the Home Rule League. Owing to her commitment to the Congress in Bombay, she had to wait up to September. But Tilak had made no such commitment so that, he inaugurated the Home Rule League formally in Pune on 28th April, 1916. Its objective as "attaining self-government within the British Empire by all constitutional means to educate and organise public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same."⁵²

Dr. Annie Besant launched her All India Home Rule League on 1st September 1916, but the League was formally inaugurated on 3rd September in YMIA (Gokhale Hall) Hall in Madras.

The main idea if the Home Rule was to achieve self-government for India. Home Rule involves a home to rule. It is the cry of a nation for self rule or self-government. Dr.Besant observed that the real object of the Home Rule League was defined as:

- a) To secure Home Rule for India through all law-abiding and constitutional activity.
- b) To maintain the connection of Great Britain by becoming a free nation within the British Empire.
- c) To support and strengthen the Indian National Congress which has laboured for thirty years to lay the foundations of Indian Self-Government.

52 M.Venkata Rangaiah. (ed.), *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol.11 (1906-1920). Hyderabad. 1969. P.103.

d) To carry on a continuous educative propaganda on the necessity of Home Rule for India.⁵³

Further clarifying the concept of Home Rule, Dr. Besant wrote in *New India* that:

'India to be governed by her own men, freely elected by herself, to make and break ministers at her will, carry arms, to have her own army, her own navy, to levy her own taxes, to make her own budget, to educate her own people to irrigate her own land to be sovereign Nation within her boarders, owning the paramount powers of the Imperial crown and sending her sons to the Imperial Council'⁵⁴

Dr. Besant explained why India should demand the Home Rule:

...India demands Home Rule for two reasons. First, freedom is the birthright of every Nation. Secondly, her most important interests are now made sub-servant to the interests of the British Empire without her consent, and her resources are not utilised for her greatest needs. It is enough only to mention the money spent on her army, not for local defense, but for Imperial purposes, as compared with the money spent on primary education.⁵⁵

The Nationalist Congress men desired that Dr. Besant should preside over the 31st Session of Indian National Congress held at Lucknow, in 1916. But she was to be the choice for the very next year for 32nd session to be held at Calcutta in December 1917. The session of Lucknow

⁵³ *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., P.269.

⁵⁴ *New India*, 6th January 1916, Madras, P. 10.

⁵⁵ Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., P.3

commenced on 26th December 1916. After a decade of disunity, the two wings of National Congress stood shoulder to shoulder to voice India's determination to be great and free. Dr. Besant and Bala Gangadhar Tilak made the Lucknow session a grand success. Speaking in the Lucknow session, Tilak said:

I am glad to say that I have lived these ten years to see that we are going to put our voices and shoulders together to push the themes of self-government. Not only have we lived to see the differences of Hindus and Muslims closed as well. So we have now united in every way in the United provinces and we have found that -
'Luck in Lucknow.'⁵⁶

The Lucknow session was truly a National Conference of Moderates, Extremists and the Home Rulers. After a long break there was a record gathering of Congress leaders in this session, including Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Bipan Chandra Pal, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, Surendranath Benerjea, G.S. Arundale and Dr. Annie Besant. Dr. Besant helped to formulate the Congress league scheme passed by the Lucknow Congress in 1916.⁵⁷ The most significant resolution at Lucknow was one on self-government.

⁵⁶ Bala Gandadhar Tilak's speech at the Indian National Congress, at Lucknow on 29th December, 1916.

See, For details, *The Commweal*, 5th January, 1917, Madras, P.11.

⁵⁷ Annie Besant, (ed), 'Famous Congress League Scheme' in *New India*, Madras, June, 22, 1918.

Dr. Besant seconded the resolution on self-government for India, moved by Surendranath Bennerji. She made an eloquent speech for demanding self-rule in India. She said that:

"The self-government of India on a footing of equality with the Self-Governing Dominions. . . . The reconstruction of the Empire after the war, India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions:-

-We have shown some power of Union - our Congress was split into half, nine years ago. But we stand a United Congress today. . . . the gulf has been bridged by Hindus and Muslims themselves, and we have linked our hands in love, in trust in mutual forbearance, in mutual respect, and we stand, today, a United Nation that nothing shall hereafter break asunder. . . . -

Dr. Besant making her eloquent speech, strongly pointed out that:

'It is only Home Rule that will enable us to defend ourselves. Until we have Home Rule we cannot be armed as we should be. . . . India has still love for England. India does not want to break the British connection. . . . There is only one thing which makes a Nation fit for freedom. England will not give you freedom. No Nation has ever been given freedom, but England will pass an Act of Parliament granting you freedom when she realises that you are determined to be free, she has asked for her place in the empire, and until that is granted there will be a danger in the path of progress.'⁵⁸

58 Dr. Annie Besant's speech at Indian National Congress, at Lucknow on 29th December 1916.

See For details: *The Commonwealth*, 5th January 1917, Madras. P.11.

Apart from these, The National Education Bill was also moved by G.S. Arundale.⁵⁹ The Congress Committee, Home Rule League and other associations resolved a programme to carry on an educative propaganda for attainment of Self-Government.⁶⁰ Dr. Besant appealed to every member of the Muslim-League to elect delegates to the Congress session committed to Home Rule.

The 1916 Lucknow session gave new strength and influence to Indian National Congress. The Congress and Muslim League were united on the platform of self-government to fight the common foe-British. Since the passing of the Congress League scheme of self-government, or Home Rule, there is only one demand, the demand of the United people of India.⁶¹ It has witnessed the joint scheme of Indian reform in the direction of Home Rule League adopted by the National Congress and the Muslim League, at Lucknow, was the result of a compromise with the object of promoting

⁵⁹ B.N. Pande (ed.), Op.Cit., P.465.

⁶⁰ Resolved that this Congress urges, the Congress Committee, Home Rule Leagues, and other associations which have as their object the attainment of self-government within the Empire to carry on through the year educative propaganda on Law-abiding and constitutional lines in support of the reforms put forward by the Indian National Congress and Muslim League.

See for details: A.M.Zaidi./ndian *National Congress, The Glorious Tradition* .Vo.1.(1885-1920). New Delhi, 1987. p.387.

⁶¹ *The Commonweal*, 8th June, 1917, Op.Cit., Pp.438-434.

National Unity as well as united effort for attaining Self-Government. It is a compromise not only between Hindus and Muslims but also between the advanced and the moderate wings of the Congress.⁶² Thus the Home Rule was a common platform on which the Hindu and Muslims could work together.

Dr. Annie Besant and Tilak revived political Unity in the entire country through the Home Rule agitation. The All India Home Rule commenced its work with Dr. Besant as its President, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer as its General Secretary, and B.P. Wadia and G.S. Arundale as its Treasurer and Organising Secretary respectively. The strong base of the League was in the south, where the Theosophical Society's followers spread the Home Rule Message. *New India* and *The Commonwealth* her two papers, rendered tremendous service for her intensive campaign for home-rule. *New India* stood for home-rule news and G.S. Arundale, edited the news. The resolutions, most important speeches with summary, were published as 'Home-Rule Series' under 'published for the Editorial Board of the All-India Self-Government fund' this was started by Annie Besant in 1916.⁶³ This was the least aggressive way in which propaganda for Home

62 A. Rangaswamy Aiyengar's article "The Congress and Muslim League in Lucknow" in *The Commonwealth*, 19th January, 1917, Op.Cit., P.41.

63 The Editorial Board consisted of 16 members from various places like:

Madras: Dr. Annie Besant, C.P. Rama Swamy Iyer, B.P. Wadia.

Bengal: Hirendranath Datta, A. Rasul, O. Chaudary.

Bombay: Jamanadas Dwarakadas, Rootansi Morarji, Umar Sobani

United Provinces: Tej Bahadur Sapru, Cy. Clintamain, Wazar Hasan.

Bihar: Mazar-ul-Haque, Parameshwar Lall, Moozam Alikhan.

See, For details: Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., P.105.

Rule, while arousing and educating the country. By her political writings in New India, the League membership increased from 7,000 in March to 27,000 in December 1917.⁶⁴

New India was the main streamline of spreading ideas of freedom to every corner of India. Dr. Besant's intention was to lead a political campaign in favour of Swaraj and Liberty. She strongly felt that:

To be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England.

To be governed by her own men, freely elected by her,

To be sovereign nation within her own borders.

Britain and India hand in hand, but on India free as is her birth right'.⁶⁵

Dr. Besant's work in India has continuously emphasised the inseparable bond between India and England. Her method to attain freedom for India was by way of intensive and well organised constitutional agitation. Dr. Besant established the 'Madras Parliament' ⁶⁶ a debating

64 B.N. Pande (ed), Op.Cit., P.481.

65 Dr. Besant's article on 'What does India want?' in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., Pp.272-273.

66 'Madras Parliament' has discussed in the chapter, Social Contribution.

society observing parliamentary forms and methods. This parliament discussed all public questions from all parties, among the signs of political and social activity. The valuable series of papers and pamphlets published by the Home Rule League and also on self-government bills were discussed in Madras Parliament.⁶⁷ Apart from these, it stood "to promote the civic Education of the citizens".⁶⁸ Several prominent political leaders became its members. In Madras, Justice Sadasiva Iyer was induced to join the 'Madras Parliament'. By constant and vigorous efforts of Dr. Besant, many leaders joined the Home Rule Movement from all over the country. Among them were, Sankarilal Banerjee, Jamanadas Dwarkadas and Kanji Dwarkadas of Bombay; Indulal Yagnik from Gujarat, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru from the United Provinces; Jitendralal Benerjee and CR. Das from Bengal, S. Subramania Iyer, A. Rangaswamy Iyengar, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, V.S. Srinivasa Sastry and many others from south. M.A.Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Madan Mohan Malaviya and others have joined in Home Rule Movement.⁶⁹

Dr. Besant made effective campaign for Home Rule for India through the Theosophical Society. The Society's followers spread the Home-Rule

⁶⁷ Rangaswamy Aiyenger's article on "Indian Reforms after war" in *The Commonwealth* December 8, 1916. Op. Cit., P.108.

⁶⁸ Josephine Ransume (ed), Op.Cit., P.412.

⁶⁹ B.N. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.482.

message to every corner. Several branches opened new libraries and reading rooms. The members of the league have organised lectures and group discussions in cities like Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madurai, Madras, Trichi, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada and other places.⁷⁰

One of the facts is that Dr. Besant was president of both the Theosophical Society and Home Rule League. This resulted in many Theosophists becoming members of the League. Several branches of the League were established in all important towns in Andhra such as in Kakinada, Bezwada, Masulipatnam, Guntur and other places. And also many prominent persons became members and spread Home Rule under the direction of Dr. Annie Besant.

Mr. Harisarvothama Rao who was the Secretary for Andhra Branch of the League, wrote several pamphlets for propaganda of the movement. The titles were *Why Swaraj*, *Swaraj - The Word and the idea and the Ideal of Home Rule*'. The branch also published a translation of Queen Victoria's proclamation which it regarded as a great character of Liberty *Swatantrya Vardhana Patramu* and translation of Sarojani Naidu poem on the Mother-land *Nootana Haindava Matru Geetamu*.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid. P.481.

⁷¹ M. Venkata Rangaiah, Op.Cit., P.107.

Dr. Besant undertook a tour of Andhra during 1916. She presided over the Chittoor District conference where she pleaded for establishing of organisations for districts, taluks and villages. She said:

"The increase in the number of District Committees is one of signs of growing political life of the country. The network of political agitation and association spread over the country, supporting and strengthening of each other, ready to move in common direction, and to organise the expression of public opinion. . . . The District and Taluq Committee an instrument for educating the people by distribution of literature, by lectures, by discussions by the establishment of free-reading rooms.....

She strongly felt that:

"The freedom of the country can never be secure, unless the civil servants are rigidly kept apart from the Government and unless the government itself is responsible to the people it governs"_____The district committee should be the eyes, ears and hands of the provincial committee and the sources of information on all subjects should be brought before provincial-legislative council. The district committee's work will be to tabulate information received from large political issues of the time, meeting once in a month, with special object to carry systematically the propaganda of Home Rule⁷²

72 Dr. Besant delivered her Presidential Address on 'District Work' at Chittoor District conference on 18th March, 1916.

See for details: *Home Rule Series*, 3 The editorial Board of the All India Self-Government Propaganda Fund Commonweal Office, Adyar, 1916. Pp. 1-6.

Dr. Besant visited various places like Kakinada, Rajahmundry and Eluru after the Lucknow session. She gave an eloquent speech at Kakinada. She said that:

"ever since the British began to administer the country, her glory had declined and indigenous trade had suffered heavily". She urged that no harm would ensue if the people were granted freedom in the administration of the country."⁷³

Apart from it , she activated the Home Rule movement by her stirring lectures and tremendous work, and also she organised a band of Home Rule Volunteers, the order of the sons of India, and the Indian Boy Scouts, for the propaganda of the Movement.

Deshamata observed in a lecture delivered by Besant at Rajahmundry that : "It is impossible to describe how excellent, interesting and pregnant with sentiment it is. She impressively told that India is a country, very poor and full of disease, that the average earnings of an Indian are very low, his average life is only twenty-three years, that education is in a low condition and that nothing but swaraj can remedy these".⁷⁴ By her tours and the eloquent speeches, the Home Rule Movement got strengthened. By her vigorous work the number of branches of the Home

⁷³ M. Venkata Rangaiah, Op.Cit., P.108.

⁷⁴ Ibid. P.108.

Rule League increased to fifty two by the middle of 1917.⁷⁵

Dr. Annie Besant took active part on student affairs, sports, public action through the organisation of Boys Scouts and bodies. The members of the YMIA made debates, Mock Parliaments, libraries and reading rooms were introduced for creating the political consciousness among the youth. They organised group discussion mostly based on the subjects of Indian finance, Local self-government etc. Dr. Besant concentrated on the student community and youth to create the political activity towards freedom struggle. She instituted home rule classes. Dr. Besant strongly felt that:

___Drill, Physical exercises games, fencing, Indian sword-play the science of self-defense, must be trained to students and it should be a part of curriculum. Boy scout and cadets must be trained. Englishmen say that India must be to defend their country before they are fit for 'Home Rule'. Students were trained in their duty and turn out the study youth trained and disciplined, ready to form a citizen army. Patriotism nourished by Indian History.⁷⁶

Mr. George.S.Arundale served and guided the students and teachers in colleges and he inspired the student community with his patriotic ideals. Dr. Besant asked the Boys Scouts and volunteers to involve and to do social work and help the poor.

75 Ibid. P.111.

76 Dr. Annie Besant's article on 'National Colleges' in *Theosophical Education Trust, Reports: 1916, Op.Cit., P.62.*

Dr. Annie Besant clearly stated that "our policy to encourage students to study life around them to work with motives of patriotism, religion and service, to read news papers, and study the thoughts and listen to the world of public men though not take active part in politics."⁷⁷

The year 1917 witnessed a quickening of national consciousness throughout India and widely popular agitation in favour of Home Rule. And this followed by an ever increasing severity of police repression. The cry of Home Rule spread to the remotest corners of the Land. Home Rule League branches were established all over the country. Madras Government brought repression on student participation in Politics. In order to do that, Lord Pentland's Government promulgated G.O. No.559 of Madras which prohibited students from public meetings of a political movements in the Madras and Bombay presidencies and central provinces.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid. P.15.

⁷⁸ According to G.O.559 of Madras that the Government of Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces issued a prohibitory order on 1st May 1917 to direct that: 'No Undergraduate of any college and no student of any school should be permitted to take part in public, political discussion, to attend political meetings to join a political association or take part in any movement.' *C.O.No.559, Home-Education 1.5.1917, in Home Rule File No.7(K)*

See, For details N.B. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.486.

According to this GO., Dr. Annie Besant suggested to the students that "they may attend political meetings if they wish, but should not take active part in any agitation". She strongly condemned that "order is illegal and that is unwarrantable as interfering in private life, stepping in between father and son, creating a gulf between pupil and teacher and disabling adult students in the exercise of their civil responsibilities'. The Director of Public Instruction of Madras threatened teachers and attacks were made based on false and secret information against such schoolteachers.⁷⁹

The idea of Home-Rule Propaganda in favour of it penetrated so deep into student community. As a result of all these, students began to take active part in spreading the message of Home Rule. The students of Madanapalle College, once wrote on black-board '... we do not ask for Home Rule ... we demand it.'⁸⁰

The British government in India had two methods to Indian political activity. One was repression and the other was conciliation. There were also two faces to British rule; one of the permanent autocracy and the other was an agency preparing Indians for future self-government under British suzerainty.⁸¹

79 *Theosophical Educational Trust Report: 1917, Op.Cit., P. 15.*

80 B.N.Pande, (ed.), *Op.Cit., P.486.*

81 Peter Robb article on 'The Government of India and Annie Besant' in

In July, 1915, the Governor of Madras, Lord Pentland raised strong objection with Dr. Annie Besant, on her publishing articles in *New India* campaign for Home Rule. Dr. Besant ignored these objections expressed by the Governor, and continued her campaign of advocating Home Rule in her paper. The Madras Government was convinced that Dr. Besant's activities were detrimental to the continuance of British rule in India. Therefore, British authorities initially planned or deportation of Dr. Besant. But instead of this, the Government of India advised the Madras Government to apply to provisions of the existing Laws to deal with her, such as demanding her security deposit for her paper and any other action deemed necessary. Accordingly, the authorities imposed severe repressive measures against the Home Rule Movement and to stop Besant's journalistic campaign. They invoked both the Defense of India Act⁸² and sections of

Modern Asian Studies, Vol.X, No.1, 1976. - P.107.

82 In July 1916, an order came from the Bombay Government which under Rule No.3 of the Defense of India Act, that prohibited Dr. Annie Besant's entry into the Bombay Presidency. Again in November 1916, the Government of Central Provinces and Berar also excluded Dr. Besant from their territory. And also the C.P. Government restricted on Dr. Besant activities. The Central Province repressed Besant activities as:

1. She was not to speak at political conference
2. No political meeting was arranged for.
3. As arranged, she was to speak only at the Theosophical Conference.

See For Details: 'The C.P. Order against Mrs. Besant' in *The Commonweal* November 24, 1916. Op.Cit., P.403.

and also see, Order No.40 dated 7.7.1916 of Bombay Government from Besant papers. Vol.II, See for details B.N.Pande (ed.), Op.Cit. P.485.

the Indian Press Act of 1910.⁸³

At the time of the registration of *New India* in 1914, it was exempted from the liability to deposit security. But, the authorities felt that Dr. Besant did not deserve this concession. In view of the continued aggressive tone of *New India* and the sharpness of the articles appearing in it, the Government of Madras moved the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court on 15 May 1916, to cancel the order which exempted Dr. Besant from the obligation to deposit security in connection with *New India*.⁸⁴ The Madras Government served a note on 26 May 1916, to Dr. Besant levied a security of Rs.2,000 on *New India*. It was to be paid before June 15th, 1916. And Government served another order to her, that demanding a fresh security of Rs.10,000 for continuance of *New India* on August 28th 1916. The Press Act gave to her the option of paying in cash or in government promissory notes. The Law Officer of the Governor

⁸³ The Indian Press Act of 1910 empowered District Magistrates to require the keeper of a printing press and publisher of News paper to deposit security from Rs.500 to Rs.5,000 and this deposit could also be confiscated if matters published were felt objectionable in any way, by the Local Government. Under this Act, the owners of the press, and editors and publishers of the news papers were at the mercy of the Local Government which was the authority to decide whether a particular piece of writing or news item was objectionable.

See, For details. B.N. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.484.

⁸⁴ B.N. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.484.

General, Mr. Sinha had promised that interest should be paid on security levied. But Madras Government paid no interest.⁸⁵ By the strong repression on press, *New India* was only suspended for three days, on June 18th, 19th and 20th of 1917 and reappeared on June 21. Mr. P.K. Telang became the editor of *New India*⁸⁶

The Nationwide protest was carried against Lord Pentland and his repressive measures against Dr. Besant and her paper *New India*. The *New India* security affair spread political consciousness in the entire nation. National leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, MA. Jinnah Tej Bahadur Sapru and C.Y. Chintamani raised their voice against Pentland's Government. Large number of public meetings witnessed in Madras Presidency in Bengal, Bombay and the United Provinces. Congress Committees in Tirupur, Tanjore, Erode and Cuddalore, Ahmadnagar, Bombay, Allahabad and other towns in India made protest against the Government. Several associations and societies like the Bombay Presidency Association, the servants of India Society and the Hyderabad Citizens' Association expressed their solidarity with the Home Rulers in support of *New India*. The Balabar Congress Committee and merchant bodies contributed their funds

85 Annie Besant's article on "Steps to Freedom" in *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.3, TPH, Adyar, 1939, Pp.74-75.

86 Dr. Besant suspended *New India* on 18th June, 1917, and sold to P.K. Telang and recovered Rs.10,000. Vasantha Press sold to Rao Saheb G. Soobhaiah Chetty on 19th June and recovered Rs.5,000. And the Commonweal Press sold to Mr. Ranga Reddy on 20th June, and recovered Rs.2,000.

See, For details: Annie Besant, *India : Bond or Free?* Besant Spirit Series, Vol.3, TPH, Adyar, 1939, P.195.

for the defense of New *India*. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* declared that 'Liberty of the Press in India is a myth'.⁸⁷

By the Government repression and efforts to suppress Dr. Besant's agitation and her activities, the idea of Home Rule became more popular. And also by repressing on her press, Lord Pentland and his government became a chief propagandist of Home Rule in an indirect way. Dr. Besant built for the Home Rule an emotional mass support. The Indian National Congress was an auxiliary of the Home Rule League, because of her inspiring leadership. It was an instrument for carrying the message of Home Rule as a birth right to remote villages as much as to urban population.⁸⁸

A large number of women participated in Home Rule Movement. They participated with self-sacrifice and uncalculating heroism and endurance. Home Rule became intervened with religion by the prayers in temples, sacred places and with pilgrimages. It spread from the village temples and also by its preachings by the Sadhus. Another factor that largely contributed to the great success of the movement was it recognized integrity of language areas and in organising, the country adopted the linguistic principle and determining the provincial delineations. In this respect it went ahead of the Congress and was its forerunner in many ways.⁸⁹

87 B.N. Pande, (ed.), *Op.Cit.*, P.489.

88 B. Shiva Rao's article 'Dr. Besant as Constructive Statesman' in *The Annie Besant Centenary Book*, *Op.Cit.*, P.86.

89 Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, *The History of Congress.Vol.1*,

As Gandhi once said, Annie Besant within a few years brought Home Rule within the consciousness of every Indian village, let alone the towns and cities. And as no other Indian worker, she embodied Swaraj or self-rule for India with the whole of her being.⁹⁰ The Home Rule Movement spread to every corner of India. And as Gandhi said in 1917, 'the Home Rule' became a mantra in every cottage.' A Gujarati paper described that, India was pictured as a woman blowing a trumpet, from the mouth of which issued the English words, 'Home Rule'.⁹¹

Home Rule Movement was marked with activity at every place. The Government failed to contain her activities in spite of its repeated attacks on her paper *New India*. And all these only led to Dr. Annie Besant's taking up other alternative movements to influence the people. One of the steps taken up by her being the strong home-rule speech at Cuddalore in May 1917.⁹²

The Governor of Madras empowered order to Dr. Annie Besant and her two colleagues. Dr. Annie Besant, G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia were served with a notice on 15th June 1917, to choose six places where they should live in

(1885-1935) Madras, 1935, P.221.

⁹⁰ G.S. Arundale's general remarks of *Autobiography of Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P.57-58

⁹¹ Dr. Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op. Cit., Pp.91-92.

⁹² B.N. Pande, (ed.), Op.Cit., P.488.

internment.⁹³

Dr. Annie Besant was asked to call upon Lord Pentland at Madras on 16th June 1917.⁹⁴ At this time, there were already rumours prevailing

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According to the CO. No.836 of 1917, the Governor of Madras in exercise of the powers conferred in him by Rule-3 of the Defense of India Rules 1915, served the order for internment on Mrs. Besant and her two colleagues on 17th June 1917, prohibiting them from attending or taking part in any speech and from publishing or processing the publication of any writing or speech compared by them placing their correspondence under censorship. Further the order directed that after the expiry of seven or fourteen days from the date of service of the order, they shall cease to reside in the city of Madras or in the district of Chingleput and shall take up their residence within any one of the following six areas:

1. The Nilgiri District
2. The Coimbatore District
3. The Bellary District
4. The Palani Hills
5. The Shaveroy Hills
6. The Municipal Town of Vizagapatnam.

G.O.No.836, Public confidential dt. 23 June 1917.

See, for details, B.N. Pande (ed.), Op.Cit., P.499.

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The interview between Lord Pentland and Dr. Besant took place at Madras at noon on 16th June, 1917. At the close of the interview, Lord Pentland said to her: 'I wish you to consider, Mrs. Besant, that we cannot diseliminate and the whole of your activities will be stopped'. She replied to Pentlandd 'you have all the power and I am helpless, and you must do what you like. There is just one thing I should like to say your Excellency, and that is I believe you are striking the deadliest blow against the British Empire in India'. Then as they neared the door, she said: 'You will pardon my saying to your Excellency that, as you are acting as the Governor, I have no personal feeling against your Excellency.'

See, For details: *Annie Besant New India*, Spl. No. August 1924, Op.Cit., P.50.

Mrs. Besant, you must stop your political work in its present form while she replied 'your Excellency I must go on, and as I think best' ...

See, For details: G.S. Arundale's remarks on *Annie Besant*

about her being interned and her activities going to be stopped completely. On her part, Annie Besant also anticipated her arrest after the meeting with the Governor, Lord Pentland. Before meeting him, she published an article in *New India*, wherein she defended all her activities as absolutely constitutional and blamed the colonial government for the prevailing situation in India. She strongly felt that India will resist

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Autobiography, Op.Cit., P.64.

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Dr. Besant's article on 'To my Brothers and Sisters in India in *New India*, 15th June, 1917. On the day previous to the serving of the order of Internment. Dr. Besant was aware of the fact that she and her two colleagues were to be interned. She had an appointment with Lord Pentland, the Governor of Madras on June 16th and the above written was written and published prior to that interview which was immediately followed by the service of the order.

Dr. Besant strongly felt that:

.... life does not consist in money and clothes, in motorcars and invitations to Government Houses. Life consists in liberty in self-respect, in honour, in right ambition, in patriotism, and in noble living. Where these are absent, life is not worth living. It is not the life of man, in the image of God, but of a brute, well fed by his owner. . . . 'To surrender liberty and touch with those I love is to me worse than death'

She further added that:

.... England fighting for liberty in Europe, and posing as its champion, is more false, to liberty in India than she is even in Ireland, is in India an autocracy, naked and unashamed, under which neither liberty of person and speech nor possession of property is safe, being at the mercy of Executive Orders. . . . We are to be punished because we stand by the principles for which England stands in Europe, and ask peacefully and constitutionally for responsible Self-Government which we work for, on Law-abiding lines...."

.... Only by winning Home Rule can India secure her trade material prosperity; only thus can she save what is left of her trade, has industries and her agriculture, improve them and reap

to face a powerful autocracy by gaining self government and Home Rule In order to achieve that India should be governed by natives and give equal importance as partners in the British Empire. Both Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League had already declared that :

that India must be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire. The Legislative Councils should be much enlarged and elected on as broad a basis as possible, with a four-fifths majority of elected members, and that of control of taxation and expenditure - the power of granting or refusing supply should be placed in the hands of this Legislative Council ..⁹⁶

Dr. Besant strongly believed that the Governor's action of stopping her activities and internment etc., would only result in further agitation by the Indian people and culminate in achieving the Home Rule even much earlier. Thus the Governor would have given the deadliest blow to the British Empire by taking these drastic steps.

the results of her own labour. Indian labour is wanted for the foreign firms. Indian capital is being drained away by the War Loan - which is to bring no freedom to India, if the autocracy has its way. Indian taxation to pay the interest on the War Loan will be crushing. When that comes, India will realise way I have striven for Home Rule after the war. I write plainly, for this is my last word. I go into enforced silence and imprisonment, because I hope India and have striven to arouse her before it was too late. It is better to suffer than to consent to wrong. It is better to lose liberty than to lose honour. I am old, but I believe that I shall see India win Home Rule before I die. . . . !

See For details: Annie Besant, *The Birth of New India*, TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1917, P.430.

⁹⁶ Ibid. P.430.

Lord Pentland gave her two options, either to leave the country, or to get interned. As Dr. Besant refused to leave India, she was interned along with G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia on June 17, 1917.

Dr. Annie Besant also opined that:

"The difference of opinion between the Governor of Madras and the Large majority of educated Indians is a small matter; but the resolution to crush Home Rule by force is a very serious one. It is practically proposed to strangle by violence the political education propaganda the Congress ordered its own Committees, the Home Rule Leagues, and other similar public bodies to carry on. We are therefore faced by the alternative of disobeying the mandate of the country or that of the Governor of Madras ... For my self, as a member of the All-India Congress Committee, I elect to obey the mandate of the country in preference to that of the Governor of Madras, which has not moral justification behind it, which outrages British Law and custom and imposes an unwarrantable, and I believe, an illegal, restriction on the fundamental Rights of Man.⁹⁷

She further added that in her book: *India a Nation* as follows:

... I shall be either to go to England or to promise to abstain from political speaking and writing. I shall do neither. I do not run away from a struggle into which I have led others, and leave them in the middle of the field. Our work has been wholly constitutional. There has been no threat, no act of violence; in noting has the Law been transgressed.⁹⁸

97 Ibid. P.432.

98 Ibid. Pp. 435-436.

The impact of internment:

Dr. Besant choose Oatacamand as her residence for her internment. She occupied the Society's bungalow called Gullistan.⁹⁹ With the internment of the three persons, the Home Rule League became more popular. There was a nation-wide protest and agitation carried for Dr. Besant's release. Several new branches sprang up in various parts of India and protest meetings were held everywhere. The Moderate Congressmen were involved and participated in Home Rule agitation. It was an open secret that Dr. Besant, despite governmental surveillance, was freely writing to her paper, *New India*. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer was devoting his talents to the work of Home Rule Organisation as well as to journalism.¹⁰⁰ Mr. Jinnah has joined in Home Rule Movement. Many prominent leaders protested against the policy of repression of the Government. Persons like Madan Mohan Malaviya, C.Y. Chintamani, Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru Jehangir Patil hastened to join in Home Rule League.¹⁰¹

The internment of Dr. Besant aroused intense public indignation not only in India, but throughout the world. Mr. H. Baillie Weaver, the General Secretary of the Society in England protested the misrule of the

⁹⁹ The President-Founder H.S. Olcott purchased land during his visit in Oatacamand in April 1888. And he built a cottage as a hot-weather retreat for founders and European workers. That Cottage was known as 'Gulistan' - 'The Rose Garden'.

See for details: A.S. Olcott. *Old Dairy Leaves* (leaves (1887-92) Fourth series, TPH. Adyar, 1975. P.52.

¹⁰⁰ Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, *The History of Congress*, Op.Cit., p.221.

¹⁰¹ B.N. Pande (ed.), Op.Cit., P.489.

Government in India. He continued to bring all possible pressure to bear upon the British Government to have the internment order reversed, and found a more sympathetic response from E.S. Montague, who had become Secretary of State for India.¹⁰²

The representatives of the Indian National Congress and Muslim League met at a joint conference in Bombay on 28th and 29th July 1917, on internment of Dr. Besant to discuss the issue of passive resistance. The Madras Provincial Congress Committee approved the resolution on 14th August 1917 that, the unjust and unconstitutional orders of internments and against the repressive policy of Government.¹⁰³

Sir.S. Subramania Aiyer, a Senior Congressman, a retired judge of the Madras High Court became the Honorary President of the All India Home Rule League. He wrote a letter to President Wilson of USA, on the situation of India following Dr. Besant's internment and oppressive policy pursued by British Government in India.¹⁰⁴ Sri Konda Venkatappaiah and Sri

102 Josephine Ransome (ed.), *Op.Cit.*, Pp.423-424.

103 The Madras Provincial Congress Committee approving the resolution resolved that:

"In the Opinion of Madras Provincial Congress Committee it is advisable to adopt in so far as it involves opposition to all unjust and unconstitutional orders against the carrying of constitutional agitation, and also against the prohibition of public meetings, peacefully and constitutionally conducted to protest against the unjust and unconditional orders of internment and against the repressive policy of Government."

For details: see Bhogaraju Pattabhi Seetaramaiah, *The History of Congress*, *Op.Cit.*, P.225.

104 S. *Subramania Aiyer's Letter to President Woodrow Wilson.*

On 24th June, 1917 Subramania Aiyer, Honorary President of the

Deshoddaraka Nagesvvara Rao also supported and signed on Subramania Aiyer's Letter. The Madras Government took serious objection to this letter. S. Subramania Aiyer had renounced his knighthood 'Sir' as a protest against the internment of Dr. Besant.¹⁰⁵

The internment followed by strong protests by the public in every corner of the country. A meeting was presided by B.N. Sarma at Young Men's Indian Association in Madras. And subscriptions were collected for the 'Besant Fund'.¹⁰⁶ A number of meetings were arranged by the local branches of the Home Rule League or Lodges of the Theosophical Society either independently or in combination with district and taluk associations and Congress Committees. These condemned the repressive policy of government. Hundreds of students attended them notwithstanding

Home Rule League addressed a letter to Woodrow Wilson, President of the U.S.A. thus:

....A recent instance of misrule is the imprisonment of Ms.Besant, that noble Irish woman who has done so much for India. As set forth in the accompanying statement signed by eminent legislators, editors, educators and pleaders, she had done nothing except carry on a law-abiding and constitutional propaganda of reforms, the climax being her internment, without changes and without trail shortly after printing and circulating your war message

....I believe His Majesty, the King and the English Parliament are unaware of these condition, and that if they can be informed, they will order Mrs. Besant's immediate release.

Home Political D., Feb.1918, File No.36. See For details. B.N. Pande (ed.), Op.Cit., Pp.500-502.

¹⁰⁵ *Deshabaktha Konda Venkatappaiah Pantulu* (Telugu) (Sweeyacharitra) An Autobiography, Dhakshina Bharata Hindi Prachara Sabha, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1966, P.205.

¹⁰⁶ M. Venkata Rangaiah. Op.Cit., P.112.

the prohibitory circular issued by the Government. A meeting was held at Tenali 'with horror and deep indignation the unnecessary and uncalled for orders of the Madras government and expressed its readiness to make any sacrifice to win Home Rule by all constitutional means and suffer along with the three martyrs'¹⁰⁷

The protest meetings were held in Ellore, Bapatla, Kurnool, Bellary, Cuddapah, Kakinada, Rajahmundry and Vizagapatnam. A branch of the Home Rule League started in Kurnool as a protest against the repressive measures of Madras Government. The people of Chandragiri organised the Chandragiri Divisional Conference for the cause of self-government. In Guntur, a meeting called upon the members of the Legislative Council to refrain from attending council meetings until the internment orders were withdrawn.¹⁰⁸

The day on which Besant was interned was observed every month as the 'Internment day', in several places. The Telugu papers protested strongly against the internments. The Deshabimani said: 'To intern Mrs. Besant who has identified her welfare with that of the people and who has devoted her all to the cause of righteousness is a stain on the British government. There are signs all over India that the internments will in no way affect the Swaraj agitation'¹⁰⁹

107 Ibid. P.113.

108 Ibid. P.113.

109 Ibid. P.114.

The *Deshmata* observed that many influential leaders of the people were joining the Home Rule League since adoption of repressive measures by Government.¹¹⁰

Mr. Montague was made the Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet. A proclamation was issued by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in 1917, which declared the grant of self-government by the gradual development of self-governing institutions. Mr. Montagu and the Viceroy toured the country to formulate a scheme for self-government after gathering public opinion. The result of continuous agitation and of growing public indignation Dr. Besant and her two colleagues, G.S. Arundale, B.P. Wadia were unconditionally released from internment on 15th September, 1917.¹¹¹

Dr. Annie Besant as President of Congress:

Dr. Besant became the favourite choice of the majority of the Provincial Congress Committees for the position of President of the Indian National Congress session to be held at Calcutta in December 1917. Dr. Besant thus became the first woman to be conferred the highest honour in the History of the Congress.

Dr. Besant was elected to preside over the 32nd session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in December 1917. Dr. Besant's address as President to the annual meeting of the Congress was an important one. She

¹¹⁰ Ibid. P.114.

¹¹¹ Josephine Ransome (compiled) Op.Cit., P.425.

declared that "when I was humiliated by the British in India, you believed in my integrity and good faith; while I was crushed under the heel of bureaucratic power, you acclaimed me as your leader, while I was silenced and unable to defend myself, you defended me and won for me release from internment. I was proud to serve in lowliest fashion, but you lifted me up and placed me before the world as your chosen representative.

....I turn your gift into service to the Motherland; I consecrate my life a new to her in worship by actionI lay on the Altar of the Mother, and together we shall cry, more by service than by words : Vande Mataram.¹¹²

The speech which took nearly two hours containing many things such as a historical account of Indians, spiritual past and its tilt towards Hinduism a review of finance and economics in the manner of the Chancellor of Exchequer, a speech from the throne forecasting political reform. Her presidential address was an elaborate thesis of India's self-government.¹¹³ She outlined the programme for India's future. That India should move towards her ancient institutions like the village council, the village panchayat, etc.

112 Dr. Besant's Presidential address to the Indian National Congress, at Calcutta on December 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th, 1917.

See for details: *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol.4, TPH, Adyar, 1939, Pp. 19-20.

113 Bhogaraju Pattabhi Seetaramaiah. Op.Cit., P.251.

Dr. Besant strongly pleaded for liberty and freedom. She ranged herself along side the people in their struggle for freedom as a sign of confidence in her. She believed that the establishment of self-government was imperative in India. It is necessary to the self-respect and dignity of the people. The demand for self rule means the cry for freedom of nation.¹¹⁴

Dr. Besant made summary of the Military and Mercantile problems was comprehensive as well as detailed. She further added that : 'The condition of India's usefulness to the Empire is India's freedom. She will tax herself willingly when her taxes remain in the country and fertilise it, when they educate her people and thus increase their productive power, when foster her trade and create for new Industries. Great Britain needs India as much as India needs England, for prosperity in peace as well as for safety in war. . . . 'War a Nation needs freedom in peace'. . . . for both countries alike, the lesson of the War is Home Rule for India.'¹¹⁵

Dr. Besant voiced protest against British powers. She opined that the British government has taken less interest to factors like child education,¹¹⁶ difficulties in sanitation and medical relief and agricultural

114 Besant Spirit Series, Vol.1. Madras, TPH, 1939. Pp.81-82.

115 Besant's presidential address at Indian National Congress, Calcutta, Op.Cit., P.45.

116 Dr. Annie Besant deliberately stated in the educational statistics as follows: In British India for 1914-15 we find that 6,333,668 boys and 1,128,363 girls were under instruction, 7,462,031 children in all. Of these, 5,434,576 had not passed the lower primary stage

development.

The prevalence of plague, cholera and above all malaria would show that the lack of sanitation in town and country. Dr. Besant argued that the treatment should be given in Indian medicines like Ayurveda and Unani medicines. She clearly stated that the difficulty in the way of treatment of the diseases was due to the encouragement of foreign system of medicine especially in rural parts.

Dr. Besant criticised the British policy of agricultural development and heavy taxation on the poor. She stated that the census of 1911 gives the agricultural population at 218.3 millions. Yet increasing debt accompanied with increasing taxation, land revenue and the salt tax have been paying havoc with the very poor. The inevitable result of this poverty is malnutrition. It would result in loss of vitality, lack of resistance to disease, short life-span and huge mortality.¹¹⁷

Dr. Besant believed firmly in the system of self-government of India based on village autonomy. She pleaded for establishing the administrative reforms in the Government of India, in provincial government and in local self-government. She emphasised administrative reforms in local self-government to contain various divisions like: 1. Village Administration, 2. Panchayat system, 3. Taluk or Tahsil Board, 4. District

and of these 1,680,561 could not ever read.

See for details: Besant Spirit Series.Vol.I. Op.Cit., p.32.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. P.99.

Board and 5. Local Government Board. Dr. Besant strongly felt that these administrative reforms would help to make an efficient administration in India.

Dr. Besant analysed the factors and special forces responsible for the new spirit and listed the following:

- a. The awakening of Asia
 - b. Discussions abroad on alien rule and Imperial reconstruction
 - c. Loss of belief in the superiority of white race
 - d. The awakening of Merchants
 - e. The awakening of the women to claim their ancient position and
- d. the awakening of masses.¹¹⁸

These factors, according to her had the splendid change of attitude in the Indian Nation, in the uprising of a spirit of pride of country of independence of self-reliance of dignity and self-respect.

The number of delegates of this Calcutta session was 4,967 which showed a remarkable leap in public spirit and patriotism of the people¹¹⁹ Besides the delegates and 10,000 visitors, thousands outside the Congress pavilion also declared their will to demand for the self-government. Since the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885, the largest

118 Dr. Annie Besant's presidential speech on 'The New Spirit in India' at Calcutta Congress Session in 1917.

See for details: Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., P.131.

119 A.M. Zaidi, *Indian National Congress Glorious Tradition*, Vol.1, (1885-1925) New Delhi, 1985, P.394.

number of delegates were represented at Calcutta session.¹²⁰ Thus the Congress became a big platform of two wings and marks the beginning of a new phase in the battle for the freedom.

The main resolution was that dealing with the question of self-government.¹²¹ Some of the resolutions passed under Dr. Besant's presidentship during Calcutta session, were:

- (a) The Congress strongly opined that the education of boys and girls to be under Indian control as well as essentially in Indian spirit.
- (b) The Congress called upon the people of India to work for the success of the swadeshi movement, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to give preference to Indian products over imported commodities.

¹²⁰ See Appendix

¹²¹ The Congress session resolved a resolution on Self-Government as follows:

- (a) Resolved that this Congress expresses its grateful satisfaction over the pronouncement made by His Majesty's Secretary of State for India on behalf of the Imperial Government that its object is the establishment of Responsible Government in India.

This Congress strongly urges the necessity for the immediate enactment of a parliamentary statute providing for the establishment of Responsible Government in India, the full measure to be attained within a time-limit to be fixed in the statute itself at an early date.

This Congress is emphatically of the opinion that the Congress League Scheme of Reforms ought to be immediately introduced by the statute as the first step in the process."

See for details: A.M. Zaidi, Op.Cit., P.399.

- (c) The Congress expressed satisfaction to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India on behalf of the imperial government for establishing responsible government in India.
- (d) Congress opined that the Congress league scheme of reforms ought to be immediately introduced by the state as the first step in the process.
- (e) Congress resolved and regretted that the British Indians of South Africa and East Africa, still face disabilities, which materially affected, unjustly and unduly restricted their movements in those parts of Europe. It said that the local authorities should take the responsibility to remove disabilities in those places.
- (f) The Congress recognised that the principles of social justice and right for the depressed classes.

The Congress resolved and recommended the formation of Indian Boys Scouts in every Province under Indian control¹²²

Towards A National Flag:

The Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress became memorable. Dr. Besant introduced the tradition that the president of the annual session of the Congress would head the organisation throughout the following year till the next session. The activity of the Congress earlier was largely an annual two or three-day gathering and speech-making session. The activity filled the organisation round the year aimed to force the British concede India's demand for self-rule. By her efforts, the Congress session brought nearer the Congress and the Home Rule League.

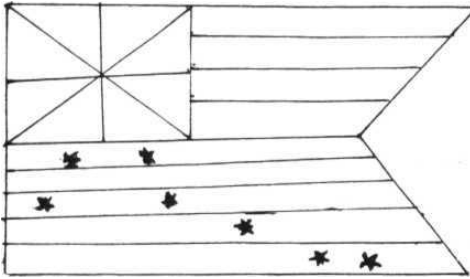
Apart from these, on the initiative of Dr. Besant at this session the question of adopting a National flag was formally raised.¹²³ Indeed the

¹²² A.M.Zaidi. Op.Cit., P.398.

¹²³ Dr. Annie Besant initiated Home Rule Movement during the time of the

Home Rule League had already adopted and popularised the tricoloured flag in Red, White and Green the colours chosen to adorn the flag horizontally in equal proportions. The design continued to be the Congress flag till 1930. In 1931, the saffron colour replaced the red, and a charka was inscribed on the white band in the middle of the flag.¹²⁴

Great War, with the aim of achieving self-rule for India. A Flag was consequently designed for the movement as shown below:



The Home Rule flag was designed in such way that it had Union Jack (British Flag) at one corner and the rest of the flag had five red stripes and four green stripes and seven stars representing the *Saptharishi mandal* based on Hindu scriptures.

The All India Committee was held at Vijayawada on 31 March and 1 April, 1921. All the national leaders like Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Patel were present at the meeting. It was in the same meeting that Pingali Venkataiah designed a separate national flag, with a few slight alternations, Gandhi accepted its as the Congress flag. It continued to be hoisted at all the sessions of Indian National Congress. It was this flag which with a few other modifications ultimately became the flag of free India.

Source:

1. S.R. Narravula, *Manajatheeya Pathaka* (Telugu)Vijayawada, 1962, Pp.13-15.
2. Bhogaraju Pattabhi Seetaramaiah, *The History of Congress*, Vol.1, (1885-1935), Madras, 1935. p.251.
3. Mamidipudi Venkata Rangaiah, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. No.3. (1921-1923), Hyderabad, 1965, pp.8-9.

By 1918 Dr. Besant was almost side lined in the political scene in India, because of her insistence on the need to obey the law and to show non-cooperation. She fought for Home Rule but she worked against Non-cooperation. Dr. Besant strongly felt that Gandhiji's proposal of Non-cooperation with the Government was revolutionary in principle. Gandhi proposed to 'Paralyze' the Government, to render it powerless, unable to govern. Non-cooperation according to Dr. Besant, stirs up hatred between Government and people and setting the people against the Government. And also Non-cooperation strikes at the foundation of society which is based on cooperation and can only exist through continued cooperation. It means a reversion to anarchy, a violent breaking of all the initial ties which bind men together. It will inevitably lead to rioting and bloodshed.

Dr. Besant's method to attain freedom for India was by way of intense and well organised constitutional agitation. Her differences with Gandhi broke out with his new policy of using the technique of civil disobedience by the people to force the British government to concede to India's demand for Independence.

Dr. Besant expressed unqualified admiration for Gandhiji's lofty ideals, insistence on austerity and personal self-abnegation and strict adherence to truth and non-violence in all political activities. But while she believed in adopting passive resistance to have evil laws changed, Dr. Besant refused, on principle, to agree to the breaking of any general law to bring pressure on the authorities.

Dr. Besant firmly believed that any movement for mass action would release forces degenerating into violence, and would in the long run be

detrimental to India's national life. Dr. Besant strongly supported the constitutional method for political reforms. Hence, she totally opposed to using civil-disobedience which she forecast, would lead to violent disturbances even bloodshed, as the masses would get out of control. When Indian political struggle was at the cross-roads, the Indian people overwhelmingly voted to follow Mahatma Gandhi and support his mass civil disobedience programme to achieve the goal of freedom, and Dr. Besant lost her political hold rapidly.

After Amritsar session of Indian National Congress in 1919 Dr. Besant broke from the Congress finally, through she attended two more Congress sessions in 1924 and 1928.

Before opting out completely from the political scene, Dr. Besant made one last effort to force the British Government accept the demand for Dominion Status for India. She organised a national convention of prominent leaders, following the official release of Montagu-chelmsford constitutional reforms in 1921. She pleaded with the leaders to unite in drafting the outlines of a bill for the 'Dominion of India' for presentation to the British Government. In 1925, a draft of the 'Commonwealth of India' bill was prepared by her. Dr. Besant personally went to England to have it presented for approval by the British Parliament. She successfully persuaded a number of members of the labour party to take the initiative in this regard. Though it was done, the move failed to get any substantial measure of support from the members of the British Parliament at the all-important stage of 'second presentation' to the House. She was bitterly disappointed. Dr. Besant gradually faded from the Indian political scene.

Dr. Annie Besant awakened in India the national self-respect which was asleep, and made thousands of educated men feel that to be content with being a subject race was a dishonour. She worked for India, in India for nearly 24 years and for fourteen years before that in England; her work on 'England, India and Afghanistan was outspoken as India a Nation. She contributed for the old religions and for Islam and against conversion to Christianity. Her system of National education was introduced in the Central Hindu College and the Hindu University at Beneras. Theosophical Educational Trust was a testimony to her ideals of national education.

According to her, a tremendous laborious work for social reform on religious lines, to make safe all of these her additional efforts extended to Home Rule, self-government within the Empire. C.Y. Chintamani rightly remarked on Dr. Besant's work: "Where can one find the like of this marvelous personage in the combination of the qualities of enthusiasm, eloquence, power of organisation, courage, energy, determination purposefulness. Optimism and faith in mission".

Despite all political differences between Besant and Gandhi, the latter had remarked that:

'cultivate the great qualities of Dr. Besant, namely firmness, simplicity, self-control etc. She is one of the greatest orators of the world, because she speaks what she believes and acts according to what she speaks. . . . She has the courage of her convictions and always put her words into action... Imitate her unflinching determination and simplicity of life... obtain the same strength and indomitable will what she possesses which alone will bring swaraj. India is not fit for Swaraj without these qualities. Remove India's. . . . and then alone will we achieve our goal. Religion is interwoven in Dr. Besant's life and she has built a bridge between politics and religion. Swaraj without religion is of

no use. It is Dr. Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and I pray that she may live long to witness a free India¹²⁵

Among those who have materially contributed to the shaping of New India, Dr. Besant is one of the biggest personalities. Md. Ali Jinnah said that: "No other person has worked and served the cause of India with that singleness of purpose, devotion and transparent sincerity as has Mrs. Besant. She has sacrificed all that she could, what for?... For the Freedom of India".¹²⁶

Dr. Besant helped Indians to feel the greatness of their culture and religion. Her contribution to the cause of Indian's freedom is immense. Besant's political aim was to see India as a free nation which would add its due share to the progress of the world in the future. Dr. Besant is, thus a strange combination of pragmatism, political wisdom and zealous enthusiasm in promoting a truly Indian spirit.

125

Mahatma Gandhi's article in 'New India' on 2nd October, 1928, in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., Pp.10-11.

126

Mohamad Ali Jinnah article in 'New India' on 20th February, 1918 in *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Op.Cit., P.9.

CHAPTER - IV
CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

Annie Besant's multi-faceted personality was reflected in different spheres of her social life. The present chapter considers her various contributions to society during the active period of her life in the sub-continent. The pervasive influence of contemporary social conditions in England and Ireland, her participation in public movements, her marital relations fearless individuality and association with Theosophy left an indelible impression on her mind about society, human nature and moral values. At the same time, her early experiences in Europe and her active role in Theosophical Society set the agenda for her future course of action.

Dr. Besant's participation in various social activities may mislead us towards concluding that she had no ample understanding of her own priorities in society in so far as her activities are concerned. However, an in-depth study of her life and various influences on the growth of her versatile personality brush aside such wrong notions. Given the training she received in Europe in social, religious and political spheres, it was but natural that she took a plunge into various segments of Indian social life after her entry into the sub-continent. She had her priorities rightly placed with the only limitation that she had to face many hurdles in India, both from the colonial government and some indigenous social groups. This explains why the momentum of her social activities and

political deeds in colonial India was kept at a low pace. Despite these short comings, her undaunted courage always helped her against all odds.

Dr. Besant's active role in Indian society was visible through her service activities, educational virtues, innumerable pamphlets and books, her articles in journals and above all, her inspiring speeches to Indian public. An attempt has been made in the present chapter to show how her aspirations for Indian society were reflected through them. There is a common underpinning in all of these activities. Her spotless belief in Theosophy and her deeper commitment to basic Theosophical tenets were some times implicit and at times explicit in all her activities. She visualised an Indian society which is based on sound moral principles, equality of people and universal brotherhood. These noble sentiments of Annie Besant were reflected in all spheres of her public life viz., as a social servant, as a silver-tongued orator, as a publicist, as an educationalist and as a political activist. Her contributions to Indian society and polity necessarily include all these aspects of her versatile personality.

The foremost thing which attracted Dr. Besant was the problems pertaining to women. She strongly felt that the recognition of Indian womanhood depended on India's reawakening. Already as far as back as 1874, she made her appearance as a public lecturer; she had delivered her first lecture at the Cooperative Institute in London. She selected the theme 'The Political Status of the women' for the talk. She told that

emancipation of women depended on the freedom of the people.¹ She pleaded in her lecture for a people's government. Recalling Edmund Burke's slogan that 'no taxation without representation', she called upon the people to work for a self-government. She advised women folk to assert themselves in all walks of life. She stated that liberty, equality and fraternity were the need of the day. She added that cooperation between women and men was a necessary prerequisite for democratic development. She expressed confidence that a man's determination and a woman's quicker judgment and tender feelings would certainly work for the betterment of their lives.²

¹ Minnie Besant, (A character sketch 1891) Op.Cit., p.59.

² Dr. Besant's first lecture was on 'The Political Status of Women' at Cooperative Institute on 25th August, 1874 in London, an excerpt of it was as follows:

'We should have the right to choose our own representatives, so that our voice may have its share in making the laws which we are bound to obey. We share the duty of supporting the state, and we claim the right of helping to guide it. Taxation and representation run side by side, if you will not allow us to be represented, you have not the right to tax us'. Allow women to grow freely, to develop as nature bids them, and they will find room for home cares in their minds, and the warmest nestling place in their bosom will be the seven of the little child Liberty for every human being, equality before the law for all the public and in private, fraternity of men and women in peaceful friendship, these are the promises of the dawning day. Co-workers in every noble labour co-partners in every righteous project, co-soldiers in every just cause, men and women in the time to come shall labour, think and struggle side by side. The man shall bring his greater strength and more sustained determination, the woman her quicker judgment and purer heart, till man shall grow tenderer, and woman stronger, man more pure, and woman more brave and free'.

Dr. Besant established girls' schools with an idea to bring women out of the shell of 'Pardah'. She encouraged active participation of women in social, political and educational fields with her sisterly and motherly advice to them. Her shining example of philanthropic work was a remedy to many evils. She had been the champion and advocate of Indian political rights religions and cultural values throughout the world, besides being champion of women's rights. She gave a series of lectures focussing on women identity. One of the prominent lectures delivered by her was on 'The position of Women in India' at Central Hall in London in July 1924.³

For building up the Indian nation Dr. Besant encouraged the maintenance of the traditional dress and ways of Indian living conditions. She got familiarised herself with the manners and customs of the people, so that she never felt as a stranger any where she went. She used to talk always of India as her 'Mother-Land'.

Dr. Besant strongly felt that women must be educated. Education according to her was a fundamental need. The Treasures of Philosophy, literature, science and art should be open to them. The daughters of India must come out from their seclusion and take their place in common life. She is not men's double but his complement, women and men are the two eyes of humanity."⁴ She had revolted against the taboos. Meaningless customs

³ Krishna Dasa, *Annie Besant* (Spl.Number) Op.Cit., pp.9-8.

⁴ "The Part of Women in Uplift of India' in *New India*, 16th July, 1915. See details: *The Besant Spirit Series*, Vol3, TPH, Adyar, 1939, pp. 114-117.

and conventions, that hampered women and kept them down as inferior humanity. She suggested that women should have enormous courage, independence and conviction of her own, make her mark in every department of life such as in religion, education, politics, economics and fundamental rights of human beings. She believed that only women could be custodians of the civilization and culture for any land.⁵

Dr. Besant gave much importance for girls' education. Girls were trained in religious knowledge and were to be familiar with the great Indian epics, puranas and vernacular religious literature. She strongly felt that girls must be thoroughly trained in household economy, in the management of the house and the knowledge of the duties of dependents and servants. They should learn to read and write the Indian vernacular and the books in their own language, Sanskrit books, the epics and dramas of her country. Dr. Besant suggested that the Indian girl should have acquaintance with Indian literature, history and geography. Every girl according to her should have a sound knowledge of arithmetic and 'the science of common life', the value of food, the necessary constituents of a healthy diet, the laws of healthy body, instruction in medical botany, the preparation and use of herbs, the treatment and simple surgical cases and accidents of all kinds. Sanskrit should be taught, stories of noble literature of India should be open to all girls. A knowledge of music (veena) was desirable to all. The Indian girls must be trained in the devotion and piety to which her nature, not only read

⁵ S. Muthulaxmi Reddy's article "The Religions and Social Reform" in *The Annie Besant Centenary Book*, (1847-1947), Op.Cit., 59-61.

but she should learn by heart, stories and poems from the best Indian literature'. Dr. Besant strongly felt that 'if the Indian youth could be educated on these lines, India's future among the nations would be secured'.⁶

Dr. Besant encouraged foreign travels. She strongly felt that foreign tours encourage mutual understanding. They would give clear idea of their ways of life, manners, traditions, customs and conditions. That mutual friendly relation would help to maintain global peace and universal brotherhood. She said that "to travel from one country to another, to spend a year or two or three moving about from one country to another, thus become a citizen of the world as well as a citizen of his own land". She suggested that the young men should know other countries than their own and thus enlarge their sympathies and widen their understanding, that they might gradually become men who were able to deal with the men of other nations'.... She strongly opined that the greatness of a nation and its sequential growth "can only be reached when one generation is linked to another and, India desires for the welfare of the whole of the Empire splendid future which lies before you and train yourself for the responsibility as well as glory".⁷

⁶ An article on 'The Education of Hindu Youth' in *The Theosophist, March, 1897*, See details, *Birth of New India*, Op.Cit., pp.107-115.

⁷ Annie Besant, *Wake Up, India*, (A Plea for Social Reform), TPH, Adyar, 1913, pp. 11-41.

Dr. Besant revolted against child marriages. As a true social reformer she felt that "it is necessary for the welfare of India as a nation that she shall break the custom of the marriage of the child, and go back to the more dignified, the more healthy and the better conditions of the elder times". She believed that the future of India as a nation depends on the abolition of child-marriage amongst the people.

Dr. Besant strongly felt that to provide education and training, development of women was a must for the nation. She opined that one great reason of early marriage was the gradual lowering of the status of Hindu women and also the gradual decrease of her education. By early marriage she lost her position of social and civil equality, her education become more neglected and her faculties were not trained, inevitably she sank to a lower position".⁸

Table No.IV.1

Table indicating the number of widows in Madras Presidency in the year 1913

Age group	No.of widows among the Hindus	No.of widows All other religions in Madras presidency	Child widows
Below-5	673	738	600
Between 5-10	1,04,072	4,332	24,000
Between 10-15	18,323	10,14,377	
Total	1,23,068	10,19,447	30,000

Source: Annie Besant, *Wake up India*, TPH, Adyar, 1913.p.65.

⁸ Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, Op. Cit., 42-76.

As a social worker, Dr. Besant made a rule in Central Hindu College as well as in Theosophical Schools at Benaras and various schools to that "forbid admission to any married boy in their educational institutions and took a pledge from every parent and guardian that he will not marry his children, while still was within the age of pupilage in the school"⁹ In order to achieve this object, she carried on some social reform activities, and she organised various societies to propagate against child marriage, and caste system, but favouring foreign travel, promotion of education for girls, and depressed classes, and several other programmes of social importance. Every member of Theosophical Society, pledged to delay the marrying of their children for some years beyond the custom of their caste and neighbourhood'.

The Theosophical Society and Esoteric section workers enrolled

⁹ Ibid, Pp.11-12.

The Founder President of Theosophical Society H.S. Olcott, and co-founder, H.P. Blavatsky have established the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society on 9th October, 1888, in London. This organisation was to be an integral part of the society. The main object of Esoteric Section was:

1. To promote the Esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of Esoteric Philosophy, there is hereby organised a body to be known as the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.
2. The Constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Mme. Blavatsky as Director, she is solely responsible to the members for results and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Esoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.
3. Persons wishing to join the Section and will abide by its rules, should communicate with the director, Mme. H.P. Blavatsky 17, Landsdowne Road Holland Park, London.

themselves and took a promise on 20th September, 1913. Dr. Besant drew the attention to reforms of social abuses such as infant marriages, the extortion of bride-monies, and created a group of 'stalwarts' who pledged to practical support for such social reforms.

"Believing that the best interests of India lie in her rising into ordered freedom under the British crown, the casting away of every custom which prevents union among all who dwell within her borders, and in the restoration to Hindusim of social flexibility and brotherly feeling".¹¹

For details: H.P. Blavatsky; *The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society*, TPH, Adyar, 1974. p.xiv.

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Dr. Besant established various organisations like, Brother of Services, for upliftment of India. The Stalwarts' and other organisations like Esoteric Section. Members were made to Promise that was as follows:

"I promise,

1. "To disregard all restrictions based on caste.
2. Not to marrying sons while they are still minors, nor my daughters till they have entered their seventeenth year.
3. To educate my wife and daughters and the other women of my family so far as they will permit - to promote girls' education, and to discontinuance the seclusion of women.
4. To promote the education of the masses.
5. To ignore all colour distinctions in social and political life, and to do what I can to promote the free entry of coloured races into all countries on the same footing as white immigrants.
6. To actively oppose any social ostracism of widows who remarry.
7. To promote union among the workers in the fields of spiritual, educational social and political progress under the headship and direction of the Indian National Congress".

See for details: Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, Op.Cit., p.297.

Dr. Besant laboured for the cause of the weak and the down trodden. She was a practical idealist and upholder of the depressed classes. She pleaded for education to all suppressed sections in the society. Dr. Besant strongly pleaded that "the duty and responsibility which rested upon everybody to improve both the surroundings and the characters of the depressed classes.

As a social worker, Dr. Besant argued that: 'the out-caste children should be taught in cleanliness, decency of behaviour and earliest rudiments of education like the component of three R's known as reading, writing and arithmetic, religion and morality, teach them simple laws of sanitation in their houses and simple laws of hygiene of personal health. The concerned teacher should watch on every pupil to take a bath, wear a clean cloth and eat healthy food. In Panchama School in Madras, the teachers were on alert to detect on general health of the children. They taught to children in three R's good manners and habits, gentle-speech with well modulated voice'.¹² Even in her early social works in 1888 she fought for proper care of children, free-food and secular-education for children in London School Board at Tower of Hamlets in London.

The President founder H.S. Olcott, started the Olcott Harijana Free School in 1879 for education of the panchama castes. After Dr. Besant's entry in 1893, one of her crowning achievement was to establish an educational trust under Theosophical society and another society for

¹² Annie Besant, *The Birth of New India*, TPH, Adyar, 1909, pp.142-148.

promotion of national education in 1917, for the promotion of national, free and secular education in India.

Dr. Besant suggested to the members of the Theosophical Society to establish panchama school, wherever there was a Theosophical Lodge or Society, to attain true universal brotherhood in the society.¹³

Dr. Besant encouraged Indian manufacturers and Indian-made goods. She felt that "these arts would awaken a sense of nationality, filtering down from higher to lower, regenerating the nation, striking its roots deep down into the physical lines of the people, unifying India, building all India together in closer and closer, till her oneness is realised, till Indians recognises in themselves a people".¹⁴

As an ardent Theosophist, she wanted to maintain a cordial relation with India. She strongly felt "that there should be better relations between India and the English, so that all mutual bitterness might disappear, and mutual understanding may lead, and perpetuate the relationship between two countries as equal partners in commonwealth for the good of all mankind"¹⁵ Dr. Besant gave no special place to the English people as members of conquering race, or as persons in administrative authority over the Indian people. She vigorously fought for equality,

¹³ Dr. Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, Op.Cit., p.104.

¹⁴ An article on 'The Swadeshi Movement' in *The Birth of New India*, Op.Cit., pp.67-68.

¹⁵ Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., P.xxv.

friendliness and modesty among those who ruled, and dignity and self-respect among those who were ruled. Dr. Besant was always keen on India becoming a self-governing country in the British commonwealth of Nations. She was the first person who used the word "Commonwealth" instead of 'Empire'. She thought that India and England had been brought together for the good of the world"¹⁶

As an Organiser:

Since, Dr. Besant became the President of Theosophical Society in 1907, she rendered great service for the cause of Theosophy. Her great contribution was the re-vitalising of the Theosophical Society throughout the world. During the presidentship of Dr. Besant, the Theosophical Society grew as never before. By her contribution, the Theosophy spread far and wide and the world has been Theosophised even more than past. Thousands of Theosophists got scattered in various countries to spread the universal brotherhood.

As an able organiser she established various organisations and provided a systematic training for Indian youth to make them patriotic citizens. She relentlessly worked for secular education, political awareness and women's upliftment. She fought against the abuses of child marriage, early-marriage, caste-system bride-money-system, and stood for promotion of girls' education, mass education and education for depressed classes.

¹⁶ Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant As Woman and as Leader*, TPH, Adyar 1941, p.89.

Theosophic Order of Service 1906:

The Theosophical order of service was founded by Dr. Annie Besant in February 1908. It stood for the service of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. The object of the order was to make brotherhood real and practical by alleviating misery and pain so that the world might become a happier place for all living beings. The real motto was, 'A union of all who love the service of all that suffers. Its aims were:

1. To minimise the sum of misery in the world,
2. To forget self in working for others,
3. To eliminate selfishness and greed and substitute love and mutual aid as the rule of the world.¹⁷

The first Leagues of the Order were formed in India for such objects as Social Brotherhood, National Education, and the abolition of child parentage. Every kind of animal welfare was supported by the order of the service. Another prominent feature of this service was that the knowledge of Theosophy was brought to people by the publication of Theosophical pamphlets and books; as well as working in social lines of the order of the service. It rendered great service in the development of International Art.¹⁸

¹⁷ *The Hand book of the Theosophical Society*, (Indian Section) Varanasi, 1975, pp. 134-135.

¹⁸ *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society* (A brief history of the Theosophical Society and its growth from 1875-1925) TPH, Adyar, 1925, pp.283-284.

For many years Mr. Janshed Nusserwanji was the Chief Brother for India and the work of the order in this country was organised from Karachi. At the 1947 International Convention of the Theosophical Society held at Varanasi, the order was revived in India. It brought all activities to India carried by members of the society. It helped the cause of Theosophy and Theosophical order of service.

Order of the Round Table 1908:

The order of the Round Table was founded in London by George Herbert Whyte on 5th July, 1908, with the help of Mrs. Maud S. Sharp and with the approval of Dr. Besant who became its first protector. This was an international order for children and young people to train them together for service. The order was a grouping together of young people inspired with the spirit of service.¹⁹ Soon branches were established in many other countries, like the United States, Australia, New-zealand, European countries, South Africa and India.

Each group was left free to adopt the Round Table plan and ceremonial suited to the particular needs of the community based on the pledge.²⁰ The

¹⁹ The order of the Round Table was composed of various age groups such as

Pages of the age of - 7 to 11 years
Companions age of- 11 to 17 years
Squires age of - 17 to 21 years
Kings age of - 21 and upwards.

See details, *Follow the King*, (Order of the Round Table) TPH, Adyar, 1935, p.3.

²⁰ The Pledge of the order was:

motto of the order was "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the light."²¹

Order of the Sons and Daughters of India:

In order to save students from the hands of the anarchists who were seeking to wrest India from her place in the Empire and were gathering youths into secret societies, inciting them to the use of bombs and revolvers against officials, both English and Indian, had already brought one to the scaffold to be others, Dr. Besant has established the 'Order of
22

the Sons and Daughters of India' on 1st October, 1908, in Benaras. This organisation encouraged youthful energy to good ends for nation, and making sure that people did not incite the young to go into danger from which they themselves kept away.

The real motto of this (society) order was 'to ensure the training of men and women into noble citizenship, and of building up the coming
23 24
generation in true piety and patriotism. The pledge of the order was

'A clear life, open mind, an eager intellect, a brotherhood for all, a 'constant eye' to the service of the King. May we like in the light of these ideals, may we be true companions, and may the blessings of the king be on us everyone'.

Ibid p.4.

21 *The Hand Book of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.143.

22 *Fallow the King*, Op.Cit., p.89.

23 Jasephine Ransome, *A Short History of Theosophical Society*, p. 378.

24 The pledge of the order of the songs and daughters of India

two fold : 1) To promise to treat as Brothers Indians of every religion and every province 2) To make service the dominant Ideal of life.

Theosophical Educational Trust (TET)
Society for Promotion of National Education (SPNE)

An able organiser and an idealistic educationalistic Dr. Besant established Theosophical Educational Trust in 1913, for promotion of Theosophical education in India. The aim of this Trust was to establish educational institutions which were opened to all, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or sex, and the religious education was made a part in the curriculum. By her constant encouragement, the Trust established, a number of colleges and schools for boys and girls in various places. This trust had various regional groups like North-Eastern, North Madras, South Madras, Mysore and North Western groups. During the year 1916-1917, the Trust founded nearly 35 schools and colleges. As discussed

was:

I promise to treat as brothers Indians of every religion, and every province, to make service the dominant ideal of life; and therefore to seek the public good before personal advantage; to protect the helpless defend the oppressed, teach the ignorant, raise the down trodden; to choose some definite life of public usefulness and to labour thereon, to perform everyday at least one act of service; to pursue our ideals by law-abiding methods only; to be a good citizen of my municipality or district, my province, the motherland and the Empire.

To all this I pledge myself in the presence of the Supreme Lord, to our Chief, our Brotherhood, and our country, that I may be a true son of India'.

From 'The Young Citizen' January 1913, See details, *Fallow the King*, Op.Cit., pp.90-91.

in the chapter on Education, Madanapalle became a nucleus of education. In order to achieve her ideas for education, Dr. Besant founded the 'Society for Promotion of National Education (SPNE) in 1916. The National University in Madras (1918) was organised by the SPNE. A number of Theosophical institutions like Woods National college in Madanapalle, the college of Agriculture and Commerce and also the training college at Madras were affiliated to this National University. The aim of this SPNE was to promote National Education under Indian control.

Dr. Besant stood in peculiar relation to the people of India. She expanded on fields like religion, education political awareness and social reform by various organisations. She was firm and strong and conducted dauntless search for truth. By her effort, Indians began increasingly to feel that sense of self-respect in matters of religion and culture. She poured new life into every department of life and to all the races and countries of the world. As mentioned in earlier chapter that when she came to India she did not at once work in political field. She laboured for the growth of Indian spirit through her religious faith emphasising the common unity and aspiration. Then she concentrated on education of masses. An everlasting monument to her educational service was the organisation of Central Hindu College at Benares. It became the main centre for not only education, but political and social awareness. Dr. Besant took pledge from boys and girls in favour of abstaining from early marriages and she condemned virgin-widowhood and the ban on foreign voyages. She forbade to admit married boy in her institutions for promotion of 'Brahmacharya'. Helped by self-sacrificing educationalists like Arundale and Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, she successfully conducted the

Central Hindu College.²⁵ It became a centre for promotion of national consciousness radiating cultural ideals.

In September 1913, Dr. Besant organised "The Brothers of Service". The members themselves to promote national unity and the country's all round progress. They included talks on self-government, mass education of boys and girls, the colour bar, the colonial system and the caste-system.

Young Men's Association 1917:

Dr. Besant took very keen interest in making patriotic citizens for India. She strongly felt that the nation will be shaped and guided and developed by the youth. The youth only would be the future statesman, leaders, generals and admirals, the merchants and scientists and the future rulers of India. In order to achieve their goal, to bring them into touch with older men of high ideals and of pure life, to lead them in examples of patriotism of service of the motherland and sacrifice Dr. Besant encouraged the establishment of young men's association.

The main object of the establishment of Young Men's Association was to cultivate in youth patriotic ideas, to inculcate the spirit of self-control, courtesy, helpfulness, sympathy with down-trodden, and to make brave, true and unselfish of coming generations.²⁶ She felt that, it was equipped to provide systematic training for Indian youth to blossom into useful citizens. It would give friends who were worthy of confidence

25 C.P.Ramaswamy Aiyer's *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit.p.64.

26 Dr. Annie Besant's article, 'Young Men's Association in *The Commonweal*, February 20, 1914, TPH, Adyar, 1914, p. 147.

and leaders could inspire others. Self-confidence and helpfulness would flourish in such an atmosphere, and unconsciously youthful ambitions would be purified.²⁷ She suggested that these associations should have recreation rooms for suitable games as well as reading rooms for ephemeral literature and a good library for study and reading, suitable furniture and they should arrange for debates and lectures.

As a staunch supporter of Young Men's Associations, Dr. Besant gifted the Gokhale Hall in Madras for youth in 1925 and named 'The Young Men's Indian Association'.²⁸

Women's Indian Association, 1917:

Dr. Besant worked successfully for the cause of women in the fields of education, industry, politics and related aspects controlling to women's upliftment. Her constant effort was for their dignity and equal rights in the society. In order to achieve her object, Dr. Besant inspired and guided the work of the Women's Indian Association. She was the chief inspirer of the association and was its first President in 1917. Margaret Cousins became one of the Joint Secretaries. The Women's Indian

27 Ibid. p. 147.

28 The foundation stone YMIA was laid by Jinarajadasa in 1925, when Dr. Besant was in Europe. It was inscribed "The Young Men's India Association'. This building is the gift of Ms. Annie Besant, D.L. for the advancement of all that is best in Indian youth. The Association has placed this tablet in grateful recognition, both the gift of and services to the Mother Land of an Indian patriot who will ever be held in devoted remembrance wherever India's name is honoured".

See details: Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.285.

Association was started by Mrs. Dorothy Jinarasadasa on 8th May, 1917 at Adyar in Madras²⁹ with Dr. Besant as President, for the purpose of advancing the interests and furthering the progress of women in India. Its objects were:

1. To present to women their responsibilities as daughters of India.
2. To secure for every girl and boy the right of education through schemes of compulsory education including the teaching of religion.
3. To secure the abolition of child marriage and other social evils.
4. To secure for women the vote for municipal and legislative councils on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men.
5. To secure adequate representation of women as municipalities, take up and local bodies (boards) legislative councils and assemblies.
6. To secure for women the right to vote and to be elected for the council of state.
7. To establish equality of rights and opportunities between men and women.
8. To help women to realise that the future of India lies largely in their hands for as wives and mothers they have the task of training, guiding and forming to character of the future rules of India.
9. To band women into groups for the purpose of self development and education and for the definite service of others. Women who agree to and will cooperate with the objects and organisation of the Association may become members. Women having the same aims can be affiliated to the Women's Indian Association.³⁰

²⁹ *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.285.

³⁰ *Annie Besant* (an Autobiography) Introductory remarks of G.S. Arundale on Dr. Besant, Op.Cit., pp.31-31.

In the very initial years after its establishment, the Women's Indian Association sent a deputation of women to meet Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India who had come to India, when the delegates pleaded for women franchise.³¹ Under the influence and able guidance of Dr. Besant, this association spread over all over India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, from Peshawar to Sylhet in Assam. Very soon 33 branches were founded in many towns in India. The Women's Associations fought for mutual helpfulness, recreation and study on various special lines including social reform, Child welfare, religion and politics, abolition of the custom of child marriage and promotion of education for girls and depressed classes.

At first the Association worked on the lines of educational development. A journal was started in early 1918, which was published periodically, in English, Tamil and Telugu, called *Stri Dharma*. The Association participated in Home Rule Movement. By 1924, there were 51 branches and 18 centres with an active membership of 2700. By constant efforts of Dr. Besant, women representation was made in Councils and Assemblies. In 1928 the women Association took place in Delhi and Dr. Besant was the main representative of this association. Mrs. Margaret Cousins, an enthusiastic worker in the cause of the emancipation of women, inaugurated the first All-Asian Women's Conference at Lahore in 1931.

³¹ C.N. Mangala, "Fighting for Women", *The Hindu*, (Madras), Sunday 29th September 1996, p.iv.

Dr. Besant: Suffrage Movement:

Dr. Besant was a staunch-supporter of 'Suffragette'. She led a great movement for equal rights and adult-franchise for women in London in 1913. Dr. Besant did not support any form of violence during the course of public agitations. Her method of struggle was more constructive than destructive.³² Dr. Besant always was keen on women obtaining her proper place with dignity and equal rights. She supported the movement for their freedom and social status. Dr. Besant wrote strong paragraphs in her *Theosophist*, when there were reports about hunger-strikes against forcible feeding in jail and there were arrests of prominent suffragettes in that movement.³³

The demand of the suffragettes was the 'suffrage' ie., a right to vote and equal status in parliament, so that they could influence the

³² The first organised movement for women suffrage began in USA, in the middle of 19th century. In 1869, The National Women Suffrage Association was founded in USA by, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sasan B. Anthony. It worked for a women's suffrage amendment to the Bedaral constitution. In the early 20th century women called 'Suffragattes', staged demonstrations and parades demanded for the right to vote. By that effort, they won and increasing the support and 30 states had granted them voting rights by 1917. The struggle for women suffrage began in Great Britain about the same time as in the United States. They won a limited Franchise was granted in 1918. And a complete suffrage in London in 1928.

Sweden and Finland led other nations by giving women limited voting powers. People were enfranchised by the Federal Government in 1902 and in all states by 1908. In Canada the provinces of Albertor, Manitoba and Saskatchewan were to give women vote in 1916. And National Rights come in 1918. South Africa granted suffrage to white women in 1919.

New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol.17, Chicago, 1984, p.274.

³³ Sri Parakasa, *Annie Besant : As Woman and Leader*. Op.Cit., p.65.

legislature to pass equitable laws for women'. Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, Christable and Sylvia were keen suffragettes who suffered much for the cause. Later they started a weekly paper called the *Suffragette* which was issued on every Friday afternoon.³⁴ One of the Indian lady students studying at that time in London was Smt. Anasuya Sarabhai. She was very keen on women's rights.

Madras Parliament:

Dr. Besant organised 'Madras Parliament' on 1st January 1915. Madras Parliament was a "debating society which observed parliamentary forms and aimed at Home Rule. It's aim was to train youth in careful study of National Problems and methods of producing measures accurately and systematically".³⁵ She strongly opined that :

"there will the future statesman be drilled, learn to march, to charge to halt, to mark time, there will be master the technicalities of Parliamentary debate, procedure, methods and behaviour. The man who have trained themselves in parliamentary ways, will be very much better member of the first Provincial Parliament, and their knowledge will enable them, to take the lead in a dignified and 'knowledgeable' way."³⁶

³⁴ Ibid. p.66.

³⁵ Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, TPH, Adyar, 1922, pp.85-86.

³⁶ Dr. Besant's article on 'The Madras Parliament', See details: *The Commonwealth*, February 19th, 1915, TPH, Adyar, 1915. p.141.

Dr. Besant strongly felt that : the uses of the Parliament "for the open clash of various opinions, when honest people meet face to face, in free discussion, antagonism tend to lose their virulence, and differences of opinion are found to be quite consistent with friendliness in personal relations."³⁷

It was an association intended to promote the civic education of citizens, by full and free discussion for all questions affecting the public interest under the rigid rules of parliamentary procedure. The reports of the debates, and the circulation of the transactions in the forms of Acts, would all serve a political utility. A committee of 17 persons was formed on 12th February 1915 for Madras Parliament. Dr. Annie Besant was elected as first Prime-Minister and Justice. Sadasivier was invited to be the first speaker. ³⁸ The Madras parliament was to discharge

³⁷ Ibid. P.141.

³⁸ The Commonweal of 26th February 1915 announced the First Ministry. The following were the ministers, and their portfolios:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Dr. Annie Besant : | Prime Minister, and Secretary for the Treasury. |
| 2. T. Ranga Chari | Under Secretary |
| 3. K.C. Desikachariar | Education |
| 4. C.P.Ramaswamy Aiyer | Under-Secretary |
| 5. C. Jinarajadasa | Industries |
| 6. B.N. Sarma | Under-Secretary |
| 7. Rai Saheb G. Subbaiah Chetty | Under-Secretary for Commerce. |
| 8. C. Gopala Menon | Co-operation |
| 9. Dewan Bahadur M.Adinarayana Iyar | Under-Secretary |
| 10. V. Venkata Subbaiah | Home Department |
| 11. Dewan Bahadur L.A. Govinda Raghava Iyer | Under-Secretary. |
| 12. BV.Srinivasa Sastri | |
| 13. R.B.Aingar | Clerk of the House |
| 14. The Whips | |

the most useful function in Madras, and was aimed to train up men and women capable of talking a useful and dignified part in public life and participated concerned rules.³⁹

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| 15. C.S. Govinda Raj Mudalir | Clerk |
| 16. J.R. Aria | Clerk |
| 17. Sadasivier | Speaker |

For details, see: Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op. Cit., pp.86-87.

³⁹ The Madras Parliamentary procedure shall be followed:

- I. The electorate shall be: 1. any statutory bodies or associations or public bodies other than those of students, carrying out any public purpose, political, social educational, commercial, literary etc., that shall enter themselves on the electoral roll of the parliament, with a statement of the number of their members.
- II. The number of the members to be elected by any such electorate shall be tentatively assigned by the committee named in VIII in proportion to the number of persons in the electorate.
- III. The number of votes possessed by any voter shall be equal to the number of persons to be elected electorate in question, and the voter may pomp for a single candidate or distribute his votes over the candidates in any proportion he pleases.
- IV. Any person may be elected as member who is of the age of 21 years and upwards.
- V. Voting shall be by ballot, the number of votes given to any candidate being written by the voter on the ballot - paper against the selected name or names.
- VI. The session of parliament shall be from 1st August to 30th April. The parliament shall be dissolved at the end of three years or earlier on a change of Ministry.
- VII. The committee which met on January 17th and 31st, 1915, with other invited members who were unable to attend, shall authority to call on two of its members to undertake severally the duties of the first speaker and the first Prime-Minister and also invite the first 100 members for the purpose of starting the parliament.
- VIII. Every member before taking his seat shall read the certificate of his election on Form 'A' together with written promise to the

Apart from this, Dr. Besant established 'Mock-Parliaments' in Central Hindu College, Benaras. She felt that mock-parliaments gave well-directed criticisms, a constructive debate, self-control, courtesy, promptitude, mental alertness, and power of speech and an invaluable training for public life. Dr. Besant listened with great interest to the debates that students used to hold in the mock-parliament. She came down from the gallery and picked out the good speakers and praised them and encouraged them with little tips as what to say and how to face it.⁴⁰

following effect:

Ido promise, on my honour, that I will submit to the ruling of the speaker and will obey the Rules of this house.

- IX. These rules shall be binding for the first 6 working months of the parliament, on trial at the end of that period the Prime Minister shall submit them to the judgment of the House, for confirmation or amendment and they shall thereafter remain the Rules of the House until amended by a Bill brought in for that purpose.
- X. Strangers may be admitted on cards signed by a member to a place set apart for visitors.

The cabinet shall consist of:

The Prime Minister
The Secretary of the Local Government Board
The Secretary for Education
The Secretary for Industries
The Secretary for commerce
The Secretary for Cooperation
The Secretary for the Home Department

The Parliament shall be limited to 300 members.

For details see: *The Commonwealth*, 12th February 1915, Op.Cit., p.126.

40 Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant : As Woman and as Leader*, Op.Cit. p. 12.

Indian Boys Scout Association:

The most important aspect of Dr. Besant's Youth Programme was her initiative in organising the Indian Scout Movement in 1917. The Boy's Scout Movement had on its agenda the programme of training the Young Citizens of the state. It was a peace movement rather than a military movement. It was intended to give national unity. The object of this movement was to bring home to every citizen and his duty to the state, kindness towards his fellow-citizen and indeed to all things animate and inanimate which live under state's protection. It aimed at developing character, citizenship and physical and mental fitness through a broad programme of work and play. The scout had to lead a clean life and obey all lawful orders. It gave training which provided keenness and alertness. The scout movement was independent and was above race, religion or social position. ⁴¹

Madanapalle college became a model centre to promote the Scout Movement. G.P. Aryarathna⁴² of Ceylon had organised the first Madanapalle Scout troop of South India. As soon as the Madanapalle Scout was on sound footing, Aryarathna applied to the London Head quarters of the

⁴¹ George.S.Arundale's article on 'the message of the Scout Movement' in the *The Commonweal* 26th January 1917, Op.Cit., p.61.

⁴² G.P. Aryarathna was an able member of Scout Troop of Ceylon. He organised the first scout troop of sarta from Madanapalle in 1916. It was interesting note that, in the same year, a fire broke out in the Thyagaraya Street in Madanapalle. An anguished mother in securing her valuables left her infant son inside the burning hut. The brave, Aryarathna pouring a bucket of water over himself, rushed into the flames and after a movement of terrible suspense, came out with the infant in his hands.

See for details: K.S.S. Seshan, A study of the History of Madanapalle, in *Itihas* Vol.11, July-December, 1979, p.85.

Emphasising the importance of scouts she said:

"If I had a dozen sons - I would send them all into the Scout Movement, as soon as they could enter its lowest grade. And I would send the daughters into the Girl Guides, under similar conditions. Brothers, Far, I, though in a woman's body, am your Brother Scout."⁴⁵

Dr. Besant published the All-india Scout monthly called *The Indian Scout* to spread the movement on a large scale. She was prompt to attend scout rallies, displays, camp-fires and initiations of new scout officers. She invariably wore the bottle-green turban of the Indian Scouts, for such functions, with a 'purple scout-scarf' round her neck and the chief-scout badge.⁴⁶

For her everlasting services to the scout, Dr. Besant was honoured by Baden Powell, with office of 'Honorary Commissioner for India' on his visit in 1921. She was awarded the order of the silver wolf, the highest decoration in the scout in 1932.

Penchant for Travel:

Dr. Besant was an International Traveller. After she took over Presidentship of the Theosophical Society, Dr. Besant went on world-tour for over twenty years. She travelled thousands of miles year after year. By her tireless journeys she could spread the message of Theosophy

⁴⁵ A Scout message was given on 7th March, 1929 by Dr. Besant. For details see, *Annie Besant Builder of New India*, Besant spirit series, TPH, Adyar 1942, pp.473-474.

⁴⁶ F.Gorden Pearce '*Annie Besant and the Scout Movement*' in *The Annie Besant Centenary Book, 1847-1947*. Op.Cit., p.138.

throughout the world.

In India, when she was in her travelling, she would sit cross legged on her seat and either start writing or watching the scenery. She was an adept at writing in trains. She minimised the vibration by holding up the paper in her left hand and writing upon it with the right hand. Slowly she always wrote, deliberately and making successive small but beautiful circles. The deliberation was so marked that every movement of the pencil had with deep significance. She utilised all the time while travelling for her work. She wrote hundreds of letters in the rushing trains and did much literacy work.⁴⁷ She always carried a large number of books with her. She was a great reader of papers magazines and novels as well. She used to give books to each of the persons travelled with her, and collected them all when the destination came near. She constantly travelled but all that she utilised for her work. She never used to carry big luggage while on her journey.

She was not a good sailor, and days might pass before she entered into cabin even, when the sea was calm, she would not be long on deck. She gave some lectures on Theosophy and made some conversations with the passengers.

Dr. Besant was not a foreigner any where. She was friend to all. But she was never able to visit some countries like South Africa, Russia, Iceland, South America, Palestine, Turkey, Spain, Greece and the far

⁴⁷ *Annie Besant* (Autobiography) (Introduction remarks by G.S.Arundale) Op.Cit., pp.45-47.

Eastern countries.

Besant was perfectly understanding and sympathetic to the feelings of the people. Wherever she went, she became popular by her lucid speeches and was careful not to hurt feelings of them.

Dr. Annie Besant delivered a series of lectures at a number of places. She inspired hundreds of people over the world, by her eloquent speeches. Her goal was to establish universal peace and a new age of national freedom and International cooperation. She stood as an example of new orientation of the religion of mankind in the light of Theosophy for the union of people of the Earth.

A list of all the countries Dr. Besant visited during 1891-1930 arranged in its chronological order is given in Appendix.

Orator:

Dr. Annie Besant besides being an able organiser and a gifted journalist, was a great orator of her generation. She had been working strenuously in India since 1893, and with her powerful pen and golden voice contributed for the awakening of new India. The gift of lucid speech, placed Dr. Besant in the front rank of women orators in the world. She had a great passion for human freedom and sympathy for the low and down-trodden. She was guided and directed by her idealistic sense of responsibility for the greater interests of the nation and the world in the promotion of peace and order.

Dr. Besant travelled on behalf of Theosophical Society. By her endless tours throughout the length and breadth of the country, speaking from a hundred platforms and reaching hundreds and thousands of men and women all over the land. She was known in the west as a gifted orator, and as a woman of great erudition. By her eloquent speeches, she trained the youth for Indian citizenship rich in religion, rich in patriotism, rich in practical efficiency for honourable livelihood and useful service. As the foremost political worker she was also preparing for wonderful future for India's freedom and regeneration.

Dr. Besant strongly supported that Theosophy was the underlying truth of every religion. She travelled round the country with her object that Theosophy was identical with the teachings of ancient scriptures and spreading that knowledge throughout the world. She pleaded that Theosophy was the source of peace and prosperity of not only individuals but of nations.⁴⁸ She said that Theosophy brought a message of spiritual knowledge and life of spiritual teaching. Theosophy was not a foe; but a friend and it worked as a peace maker. It explained one native religion to another. Theosophy was unifier and spread mutual toleration and respect and it preached the doctrine of Humanity and a Universal Brotherhood.⁴⁹

48 The Farewell Address presented by the 'Sanmarga Samaj', Bellary to Dr. Annie Besant and Party. See Details: *The Theosophic Thinker* (English Monthly) Vol.11, N0.1, Bellary, January 6, 1894, pp.5-7.

49 Dr. Annie Besant delivered a lecture on "Theosophy and India" at James Hall, Piccadally, London. See details, *The Theosophic Thinker*, Vol.11, No.22, Op.Cit., pp.174.175.

George Bernard Shaw said that Dr. Besant always played the heroic role for, she was "essentially heroic in her power, course and oratorical genius" She applied these qualities and powers to the society for hopes of justice. Theosophy proved itself that it not only illumined the darkness left by the uprooting of erroneous religious ideas implanted through centuries of subordinations but its rays reached into every field where she laboured.

Dr. Besant was appointed as special delegate to speak on behalf of Theosophical Society for the 'Parliament of Religions' conference which was held at Chicago. Theosophy was presented most thoroughly before the parliament.⁵⁰ Dr. Besant rose to unbelievable heights of eloquence and influenced the gathering.⁵¹ The powerful persuasive oratory, and faultless logic, the highly consistent and argumentative power of her speeches had given a new hope to the Theosophical movement.

50 The Parliament of Religions Conference was held at Chicago on 16th, 17th and 18th September 1893. Theosophy has made good contribution in that conference. Theosophy covered various aspects like religion, philosophical, scientific, metaphysical, ethical and occult. It gave good idea of theosophy and the strong contrast which it bears to the religion. The Theosophy and the best comparative merit religions and of the Eastern and Western sciences and philosophies, were selected to represent the claims of Theosophy before the Parliament of religions. The best expositions of Theosophical doctrines such as karma, re-incarnation, the septenary, constitution of cosmos and man, the double aspect of mind, the ethical standard of Theosophy, the identity of the religions thought all over the world.

See for Details: *The Theosophic Thinker* Vol.11, No.7, Op.Cit., p.54.

51 Besides Besant, those who represented in parliament of religion were, Swami Vivekananda, V.K.Gandhi, Dharmapala and G.N.Chakravarti for Hindu Vedanta, Jainism and Buddhism respectively. See for details: H.S.Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves* (Fifth Series) 1893-96, TPH, ADR, 1976, p.35.

Dr. Besant lectured on "The world's Great Need" at Town Hall in Colombo on 9th November 1893.⁵² The large audience was deeply impressed and excited to enthusiasm by her eloquence, frankness of speech and sympathy for the views and aspirations of the people.

Dr. Besant's arrival in India on the 16th November 1893⁵³ inaugurated her first Indian tour with two eloquent lectures. She lectured splendidly on the subject of 'Life after death' to a large audience. She gave another magnificent lecture on pilgrimages of the soul on the same day.⁵⁴ She delivered a course of four lectures on the 'Building of the Cosmos' at the Theosophical Society convention held on December 1893.⁵⁵ Subsequently she delivered a series of lectures at Madras, Calcutta, Lahore, Bareilly, Beneras, Agra and other places. During 1894 she toured and lectured at various places like, Madras, Madura, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Bellary, Hyderabad (Dn.) Bezwada, Rajahmundry, Calcutta Berhampore, Bakimpore, Bombay and other places.⁵⁶ She spoke on all

52 Ibid., p.51.

53 Dr. Besant set her foot on Indian Soil for the first time at Tuticorin at 10.24 a.m. on *Thursday, 16th November 1893*.

See for details: H.S. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves* (Fifth Series) 1893-1896. Op.Cit., p.54.

54 Ibid. p.54.

55 *Annie Besant* (An Autobiography, T.P.H., Madras, 1939).
See the introductory remarks on Besant's life by G.S. Arundale, p.477.

56 See the Table of Dr. Besant and her lectures in various places.

religions and their social and political importance. By her eloquent speeches, she paid relentless service for the cause of Theosophy.

Dr. Besant lectured on 'Theosophy and Modern Progress' in Town-Hall in Lahore on 24th Feb. 1894 before an audience of five thousand people. The penetrate quality of her voice reached the outermost circle of hearers.⁵⁷ On March 1st, she gave a magnificent lecture on 'Man and His Destiny' in Bareilly. The President-Founder, Col. H.S. Olcott mentioned in his diary that the lecture was a Kohinoor among diamonds.⁵⁸ He accompanied her during the tour of 1894.⁵⁹

Dr. Besant said that the future redemption of the nation lay in youth's hands. Nations are built of societies and societies are formed of individuals. India was great when she was great spiritually. She opined that the Mother-India was sleeping and crying but not dead. We should learn to chant in her ear softly the songs that were sung in days before

⁵⁷ *Old Diary Leaves*, (Fifth Series) 1893-1996, Op.Cit., p. 134.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵⁹ Olcott gave an account of Dr. Besant's tour of 1893-94. " She answered off-hand the most difficult and abstruse questions in science, philosophy, symbolism and metaphysics, of grand orations daily to our packed and sweltering audience which so overflowed into the surrounding compounds, streets some time by hundreds and thousands had to be driven away by the police — Over all, though all lingering with me like the strain of a sweet symphony dying in the distance, the recollection of the most splendid series of discourses I ever listened to in my life, and of intimate companionship during these sunny months with one of the purest, most high-minded, most intellectual and spiritually elevated women of our generation, or of any previous age, of whom I have read in history."

See for details: H.S. Olcott., *Old Diary Leaves*. (1893-96) Op.Cit., p. 150-151.

them. She would stir in her sleep, her eyes would open and stand once more in all her majesty as mother of spirituality.⁶⁰

Dr. Annie Besant's speeches focussed on the greatness of the culture, religion and scriptures. She said, as from the East travels light west ward, so the religion of India travelled with its moralising affect.⁶¹ Wherever Dr. Besant appeared, thousands flocked to see her. She sympathised with the people of this land. She felt that she was one with them in their thoughts and feelings. Dr. Besant thoroughly studied the History of India. She worked for the people in their aspirations and political freedom.⁶²

Dr. Besant felt that she could make India again a nation, with its ancient traditions of common ancestry and it had reference to the great philosophy which belonged to every Indian as a birth right. It was a tradition of common spiritual hope and unity and that was the revival of the ancient teaching and the inspiration that would make her people once again.⁶³

60 Dr. Besant delivered her First Lecture in Madura 'The Dangers of Materialism' See details: *The Theosophic Thinker* Vol.11, No.1, January 6, 1894, Bellary, pp.5-7.

61 A lecture delivered by Dr. Annie Besant on 'India's Mission in the world' at Calcutta Town Hall on 12th January, 1894. See details: *The Theosophic Thinker* (Vol.11, No.5, Feb.5, 1894) Op.Cit., p.37.

62 An article from 'the Karnataka Prakasika' in *The Theosophic Thinker*, Op.Cit., p.39.

63 Dr. Annie Besant delivered a lecture on 'Theosophy and India' at James Hall, Piccadally, London. *The Theosophic Thinker* (Vol.11, No.22, June, 1894) Op.Cit., pp.174-175.

Dr. Besant was a splendid speaker. She spoke of great responsibility of parents who brought up their children as future citizens. She firmly believed that children must be taught in religious education in their curriculum.⁶⁴ She strongly argued that every person had moral obligation to educating and training the child. She supported the system of national education under the control of Indians. She gave a series of lectures on education. In order to achieve her aim she established night schools, mass education centres, panchama schools and girls high schools. She herself established Educational Trust under the name of Theosophical Education Trust. Many educational institutions were run by that trust.

For the promotion of National Education, Dr. Besant suggested that "Instead of sending children to Government Schools, you build your own schools and name your own teachers. India is poor but not too poor to build educational institutions for your children ... No need to increase the charitable trusts to education but turn the lakhs of rupees for the restoration of ancient temples and building of their pinnacles and turn them into channels to fertilise and India would have wealth enough to educate your children."⁶⁵ Dr. Besant showed keen interest in educating the youth in proper identity.⁶⁶

64 Dr. Besant lectured at the Eighteenth Anniversary of Theosophical Society, December 27-29, 1893, Adyar. *The Theosophic Thinker*, Vol.11, No.2, Jan.13, 1894, Op.Cit., pp.10-11.

65 Dr. Besant lectured on Indian Awakening in 1910, Bombay, *The Birth of New India*, TPH, Adyar, n.d. p.9-10.

66 Dr. Besant delivered a lecture on 'Education as a National duty' in Bombay on 9th March, 1903. For details: see, *The Birth of New*

Dr. Besant spent her time travelling to every corner of India, to awaken the Indian Society. She pointed out that one of the greatest difficulties facing the country was the unification of the nation. There had been temporary unions from time to time, but never was one nation extending from the Himalayas to cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathaiwar. The task before Indians, therefore, was to make a self-sustaining and self-consciousness nationality.⁶⁷

Dr. Besant gave a series of lectures on regeneration of the society. During one of the lectures at Bombay, she said that the Indian nation will not grow by any other nation, but by the growth of character within own boundary. England can never make you free, you can only make yourselves free by becoming noble and upright, brave and true. Nations made of such means must be free. You must build the basis of noble character and of the public spirit which glows itself in true citizenship. As George Hamilton has rightly said: India must be governed on the basis of Indian feelings, Indian traditions, Indian thought and Indian ideals.⁶⁸

Dr. Besant enthusiastically 'Indianised' herself in the ways of living and appearance as much as possible to get into touch with the hearts of the Indian people. She not only lived with Indians but lived as one of them. She wore saris all the time, sat cross legged on the

India, Op.Cit., pp.91-106.

⁶⁷ *Annie Besant Autobiography*, Op.Cit., p.508.

⁶⁸ Dr. Besant delivered a lecture on 'Education as a National Duty' on March 9th, 1903, in Bombay, See details, *The Birth of New India*, Op.Cit., p. 105.

ground or on a 'Chowki' while at work. She ate seated on the ground in typical Indian style, and not at a table. She used her hand to eat instead of spoon and fork.⁶⁹

Dr. Besant was introduced to Charles Bradlaugh in August 1874. Bradlaugh was already a well known leader of Free Thinker Movement in England.⁷⁰ The free Thinkers did not accept religious dogmas. The work of propagating free thinking philosophy brought out the oratorical and leadership qualities in Annie Besant. The close friendship made between both of them, was to last until Charles Bradlaugh's death in 1891. Of Charles Bradlaugh, she said that "How great was my debt to him I can never tell_____he was my sternest as well as my gentlest critic pointing out that ... It was easy to gain indiscriminate praise and instinct admiration but that we should be our own harshest judges and know thoroughly every subject we taught. He saved me from the superficiality

⁶⁹ Indians used plantain leaves for plates and earthen vessels for cups, tumblers, etc. and ate with fingers instead of knives, forks or spoons. Dr. Besant liked very much samosa, cracklers (Pappadam) and she took plenty of Tea.

See for details: 'Memories of Dinners and Foods' Sri Prakasa: *Annie Besant, as Women and Reader*, TPH, 1941, pp.50-41.

⁷⁰ Charles Bradlaugh(1833-1891) was English Political leader and radical atheist . He was born at Hoxton, England on September, 26, 1833. Most of his life was spent in leading public campaigns on behalf of "Free Thought" (atheism) and republicanism. His philosophy of atheism was 'Without God'. 'It does not say there is no God I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception' - Charles Bradlaugh - *Free Thinker's Text Book* on his election to parliament in 1880, he claimed an atheist's right to affirm his Oath instead of swearing on the Bible required. His skillful and successful fight to gain formal recognition lasted six years and became an issue of great political and constitutional importance. He remained in parliament until his death on 30, January 1891.

that my fatal facility of speech might so easily have induced"⁷¹

Dr. Besant was fond of some Sanskrit prayers, and usually they would be recited before she lectured.⁷² She defended many Hindu manners and customs that had been subjected to severe criticism both by Christian missionaries and by English-educated Hindus themselves. Her audiences used to be very small then, but she never worried at any time of her life on that score. Whether the audience were large or small she always spoke with the same seriousness of purpose and eloquence of expression. Her wonderful mastery on language, her sweet silvery voice, her eyes beaming with spirituality and earnestness, thrilled and enthralled her audiences.⁷³

Dr. Besant never dictated to a secretary. All her letters, including business, formal and official ones, were in manuscript. She wrote all articles, whether for news papers or learned magazines by herself. The manuscript of all her books was also in her own handwriting. She put her

⁷¹ A *History of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society* (A Study Course Book) Wheaton, (USA) n.d. p.66.

⁷² Kanchi Prasad, who was boarder of Central Hindu College, Hostel, had a very musical voice and was invariably invited by Dr. Besant to recite the famous prayer to Shiva (The famous third figure of the Hindu Trinity) in five verses, each dedicated to a letter of the heading "Namah Shivaya" (Hail Shiva) before her own lecture.

See for details: Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant, As Woman and as Leader*. Op.Cit., p. 16.

⁷³ C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer's article in *Annie Besant* (servant of humanity) Special Jubilee Number, New India, Madras, August, 25, 1924, p.4.

ideas on paper after giving serious thought to them. That is why her handwriting was so uniform, each letter well-shaped and perfectly legible, and the manuscript was never revised. When she got very old, she had younger co-workers accompanying her, but she never had a personal assistant, or private secretary or stenographer.⁷⁴

Dr. Besant's best lectures were all carefully thought out, almost prepared, beforehand and never carried any notes. She never consulted any papers as she spoke. She rehearsed her lectures to herself once, before going to the lecture hall, and she had strong memory when she spoke. She never faltered for a word and her voice never broke. By the end of her speeches, by working up her audiences to a certain pitch, she used to leave their minds in possession of some peculiarly tragic or pathetic scene created by the magic of her words. She had ended a lecture with great effect describing 'India as a mother fallen to the ground in a swoon, who could be killed only by the blows of her own sons and whom none else could touch'.⁷⁵

74 Dr. Besant appointed private secretaries from time to time. Her friends and colleagues who used to travel with her were. Dr. Bhagavan Das, and Sardar Chiranjit Singh to be known as her private secretaries.

See details: Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., p.15.

75 Ibid. p. 17.

Dr. Besant normally did not like any one to speak after her. A person who delivered many lectures would naturally is expected to be hoarse sometimes. She never was. Whenever she was the sole speaker, she always spoke for just 60 minutes. Her perorations began about two or three minutes before the end. Her pronunciation was so perfect and her voice carried so well that large audiences could hear her easily. She never required any water to drink while speaking. And at the end, she never took cold water; but hot tea. She would not stand under a fan when she spoke, and to the last she never spoke sitting. But, her gestures were very few and characteristic while she spoke.⁷⁶

Dr. Besant always disliked having any piece of paper in front of her while she was speaking. She thought that was a great impediment.⁷⁷ She

⁷⁶ A characteristic gesture of Dr. Besant was that she spoke from the right side of the table, and always pressed the three lan fingers on the table while she spoke. She spoke just simply and straight. She was seen always pressing her right elbow to her side and resting the out-stretched palm of her right hand on that of the left. Another gesture was that she employed at the height of her eloquence when periods rolled like thunder, spreading out both her hands, palms upwards, sometimes at right angles to her body, sometimes at 45 acute, some times 135 obtuse, and keeping steady at that for some movements. Still another gesture was putting her right-hand index finger or her mouth, right across the middle and shaking her body from side to side, or dramatically stretching the right hand in front with the index finger pointing to the distance, keeping the left hand hanging by her side.

See details: Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., pp.59-60.

⁷⁷ Dr. Besant read out her annual survey of the work of the Theosophical Society (anniversary) in Beneras. She had placed the manuscript on the task and read out finely as if she was speaking. Still it was not the same. Towards the end of her lecture she said : 'Let golden links unite those whom karma's iron chains have drawn together'. That was her ideal of the bord that was to unite all workers together who were working for a great ideal.

had very keen interest on her 'lecturing dress'. She used to be very carefully and beautifully dressed in white at the time of her meetings.

As an Author:

When Dr. Annie Besant came to India, she was already a familiar public-figure in England. As a free thinker she wrote a series of stirring articles on Athism and human rights on rational study of religion etc. She asserted in her book *The True Basis of Morality* that : "an ideal which should stir the emotions and impel to action, and a clear understanding of the sources of evil and of the methods by which they might be drained. . . . Morality touched by emotion' be religion, then truly was 1 the most religious of Atheist is, finding in this dwelling on and glorifying of the ideal, full of satisfaction for the loftiest emotions'.⁷⁸

Dr. Besant in association with Charles Bradlaugh worked as Co-editor of *National Reformer*. She kept up her journalistic traits and produced pamphlets on atheism, republicanism in India and Ireland.

Dr. Annie Besant had constantly contributed to *National Reformer* while holding public debates on religion and politics. She travelled and lectured all over the country. During her tours, she was subjected to many attacks. She was accused of being in favour of abolition of marriage. Dr. Besant and Charles Bradlaugh fought together for the right

See details: Sri Prakasa, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., p.42.

⁷⁸ C.P.Ramaswamy Aiyer, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., p.19.

to publish their ideas. They advocated composition of voluntary limitations on the size of family and gave information about methods of birth-control. Dr. Besant herself wrote another pamphlet on 'the law of

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Dr. Charles Knowlton of USA published a book in 1835 on family planning measures. He argued in that book that early marriages of women would check the evil of prostitution and small family norm would drive away the problem of poverty from the society. He gave few suggestions on the family planning methods in the book. It was sold in USA and England for a period of forty years without any check on its sale. The problem arose when a publisher from Bristol (UK) printed the same book after adding a few objectionable pictures. He was immediately punished. Along with him another publisher was arrested who also was selling the books written by Annie Besant and Bradlaugh. Annie Besant and Bradlaugh initiated inquiries into the details of Knowlton's book and in order to ascertain whether the publication of former book was punishable, they published the book on their own. They began selling the book from 24th March 1874 onwards between 5 and 6 pm. everyday. Anticipating their arrest by police for this act, they willingly awaited the police to apprehend them between 10 and 11 am. every day. They were conscious of the problems emanating from their stand. While this will give enough scope for his opponents to criticise Bradlaugh, he may at some time forego his membership in the parliament. On the other, it would defame Besant in the eyes of public. Despite such fear they did not retreat their firm stand. The police arrested them on 6th April 1874 on the basis of complaint lodged by the Christian Evidence Society. They were produced before the court and were released on bail. The case was later transferred to the High Court wherein the Jury ruled that the contents of the book were antagonistic to public morality though the intention of Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were fair and did not, in any way, subscribe to the contents. On the basis of the judgement Bradlaugh and Besant were found guilty. On being asked by judge to assure the court that they would not hereafter sell the book, they did not promise the court to do so. The presidency judge consequently, sentenced them to six months imprisonment and fined them at the rate of 200 pounds per head. Also they were asked to give a security for 500 pounds for their decent behaviour for future. The court ruling was finally quashed when it was found that the earlier judgement was erroneous. The scope to arrest them was still left to the police whenever Besant and Bradlaugh were found selling the book. To avoid the problem Dr. Besant wrote a book later on her own on family planning within the framework of Theosophy.

For more details: C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer; *Annie Besant*, 22-24 Op.Cit., pp. and also see, Gunturu Venkata Subba Rao; *Annie Besant*, (Telugu), Op.Cit, pp.55-63.

population'. She also helped to organise at that time the Malthusian league for the purpose of getting these ideas before the poor. In 1878 she published a book entitled, *England, India-Afghanistan*. She exposed her liberal views on the misgovernance in India and folly of the Imperialist expansion and pleaded for Home Rule for India. It was at that time she showed interest in Indian affairs and as a spectator and not as a participant. One can find a link between these activities and her leadership of Indian Freedom Movement later. By the end of 1888, W.T. Stead and Dr. Besant had become close friends. He was a believer and she was an atheist, but both worked with hatred against oppression. She wrote in favour of brotherhood and rational ideas in a weekly news paper called '*Link*'. There was a long intervening period for nearly 21 years of her arrival in India in 1893 to 1914, which marked her entry into both Indian Politics and Journalisms.

Dr. Besant devoted much of her time to the amelioration of the social problems of the poor. While she started for England, she protested against Sir John Lubbock's Bill which had fixed a twelve-hour working day for children. She began to write a series of articles on the re-distribution of political power and on the evolution of society and modern socialism. Apart from it, she expressed her views through writings in 'our corner' a news paper which she established in January, 1883. It was in active circulation for six years. It contained fiction, essays, poetry and other issues such as gardening, chess, puzzles and science.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Rosemary Dinnage, *Annie Besant*, Op.Cit., p.57.

As a tried social worker Dr. Besant wrote many articles for upliftment of the poor. She wrote an article in 1885 on social equalities and improvement of workers and their wages:

"Christian charity? We know it work. Its gives a hundred weight of coal and five pounds of beef once a year to a family whose head could earn a hundred such doles if Christian justice allowed him fair wages for the work he performs. It plunders the workers of the wealth they make, and then flings back at them a thousandth part of their own product as charity'.⁸¹

Dr. Besant wrote an article on working class and fought for their living conditions. She wrote:

"The cry of starving children was ever in my ears; the sobs of women poisoned in lead works, exhausted in nail works, driven to prostitution by starvation, made old and haggard by ceaseless work. I saw their misery was the result of an evil system was inseparable from private ownership of the instruments of wealth, production that while the worker was himself but an instrument, selling his labour under the law of supply and demand, he must remain helpless in the grip of the employing classes."

Several important books had been published during the year 1893 by Dr. Besant. In the same year she wrote on 'The Seven Principles of Man' This book contains a series of seven Manuals on Theosophy. The book on *Reincarnation* and the third edition of the *Secret Doctrine* (then out of print) were revised by her. Dr. Besant founded a journal for Hindu Youth called *Arya Bala Bodhini*. *आर्या बाला बोधिनी* in January 1895. It was

81 Ibid. p.58.

later amalgamated into the Central Hindu College Magazine in 1900.⁸² Dr. Besant translated *Bhagavad Gita* into English and she compiled small booklets containing of tales from Aryan literature.

There was a close, intimate and continuous inter-relationship between her journalistic and her political work. Her pamphlets, writings and news paper articles reflected the different phases of her political life. Since 1913, she began to take active part in Indian Politics. In the same year, she published a series of eight lectures within the title of *Wake Up India*. In that she demanded an end to the petty animosities within India, the reform of child-marriage and the caste system, better rights for Indian women and a revival of the panchayat and the self-governing village council.⁸³

Dr. Besant started a weekly news paper named *The Commonweal* on 2nd January, 1914. The aim of this paper was to hold a free platform for the

82 Josephine Ransome: *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.298.

83 Dr. Besant compiled a book as *Wake Up India* which consisted of various lectures by eminent scholars. They were : "Foreign Travel" by Dr. S. Bhubramanian Iyer, 'Child Marriage and its Results' by Dewan Bahadur T. Sadasiva Iyer, 'Our Duty to the Depressed Classes' by B. Tyabji 'Indian Industries' as related to Self-Government' by Dewan Bahadur. M. Adi Narayana Iyali. And 'Exports, Weaving, Political Effects and Moral Effects' as Appendix lectures. 'Mass Education' by Hon. Justice Miller, 'The Education of Indian Girls' by Mr. P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, 'Colour lab in England, the colonies and India' by Hon. Kesava Pillai and 'The Passing of the Caste System', by L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer.

See, for details: Annie Besant; *The Future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., pp.42-43.

expression of varied opinions on religions, educational, social and political problems, so that the burning questions in all parts of the world may be thrashed out and truth elicited by thorough discussion. Dr. Besant clearly stated that "we aim at the building up of complete Self-Government from village councils through district and municipal boards and provincial legislative assemblies to a National Parliament, equal in its powers to the legislative bodies of the self governing colonies, by whatever name these may be called; also at the direct representation of India in the Imperial Parliament, when that body shall contain representatives of the self-governing states of the Empire."⁸⁴ This paper embodied a set of fourfold ideal viz., Religion, Education, Social Reform and Politics. In the realm of religion it stood for Individual liberty and mutual respect. In education it pleaded for flexibility in examination, encouragement of teachers and advocated physical, moral, religious, cultural education, lowering of fees, encouragement of the vernaculars and classical languages of India. It also pleaded in favour of Technical education, on national lines. In 'Social form' it advocated foreign travel, upliftment of women and uprooting colour bias and caste system. In political reform, it argued for the establishment of self-government, liberty and equal freedom and political reforms.

Dr. Besant purchased *The Madras Standard* and renamed it as *New India*. The first number was issued on 14th July 1914. It stood for the self-government, pleaded for National Education and Home Rule.⁸⁵ Her

⁸⁴ *The Commonwealth*, 2nd January, 1914, TPH, Adyar, 1914, p.4.

⁸⁵ Annie Besant, *The future of Indian Politics*, Op.Cit., p.55.

dynamic personality and the clear, strong, definite lead she gave, attracted the youth to her. Her Home Rule League Became a powerful mission. Her *New India* and *The Commonweal* became the most popular and influential papers, for their political activity.

Dr. Besant wrote a series of political pamphlets through *The Commonweal* and *New India*. From 1915, she published continuously on Political Social and Educational affairs. *The Commonweal* and *New India* were destined to range the battle for home Rule for India. She published a political pamphlet in August 1914, called, *India:A Nation*. A plea for Indian Self-Government'. She claimed "India as a Nation, claiming her freedom, with an appeal of Self-Government."⁸⁶ In the same year she published a series of articles in *The Commonweal* entitled *How India Wrought for Freedom* with subtitle of history of National Congress as told from the official Records (1885-1914). In that Dr. Besant said 'It is a plain story of India's Constitutional struggle for Freedom, a story so pathetic in its patience, so strong in its endurance, so far seeing in its wisdom, that it is in India's justification and for arresting the right to freedom - for her demand for Home Rule'⁸⁷ Apart from these, she published various pamphlets on political affairs, such as *Shall India remain a Nation ? What is Swaraj ? steps for freedom* and *Educate for Home Rule*, etc. Entire nation was impressed at the writings of Besant through *The Commonweal* and *New India*.

⁸⁶ Besant Annie, *Home Rule League Series*. No.3, Commonweal Office, TPA, Adyar, 1916, p.29.

⁸⁷ Besant Annie, *How India Wrought For Freedom*, TPH, Adyar, 1915, p.xiv.

The demand for swaraj spread to every part of the country. Annie Besant was increasingly becoming popular for her criticism of the colonial government. To curb her activities, the Government demanded a security of Rs.20,000 from her journal *New India*. Commenting on the Government order of 16.5.1916, she wrote in the journal that the reason was not known for such an active interest of the Government and she entertained suspicion about the safety of the property of the journal. She added that the government did not point out her mistake and hence they could not rectify the same as they were ignorant of it. She declared that their aim was either 'money or life'. She questioned the action of the government and expressed the doubt that they might commit the same mistake again since the ground for government action was concealed. In such a context, the government was sure to demand more money in the form of securities. She criticised that this was the nature of British Laws in India and other regions. It may be mentioned here that *New India* paid an amount of Rs.20,000 over a period of time in the form of securities. This amount was later refunded while a major share of it was retained by the Government.

The British Government began to suppress the political activities of Besant. On 3rd July, 1917, the Government informed Dr. Besant that she was permitted to publish or republish purely on Theosophical or religious writings and speeches composed by her, provided they had been examined and passed by the Governor in council or by some other duly appointed officer.

Dr. Besant sharply reacted to the restriction of Government on her, and wrote:

"All I write is equally Theosophical and religious, being directed to the evolution of the spiritual intelligence in man exerted in spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical departments of human life; they all form part of one great movement for human progress and liberty and order. The Theosophical society cannot identify itself with any special creed, religious, social, or political, but it can and ought to stand for the sacred right of free speech for all opinions which do not incite to crime. . . . It has therefore allied itself in this struggle in 'entente cordial with the National Congress, the Moslem League and the Home Rule Leagues in one solid body united in resistance to autocracy and in defense of the liberty of the people, and I as the president of the Theosophical Society will conclude no separate peace."⁸⁸

The Government action in this regard was attacked by various sections of people, throughout the country. As a result, 'Home Rule Movement' was given a further fillip in the era of political struggle.

Dr. Besant was awarded 'the Subba Rao Medal' in 1895 for her outstanding literary ability.⁸⁹ In 1922, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (D.L) by Benaras Hindu University was conferred on her. Besides the writings from her pen, magazine articles pamphlets and books were of 396 in number. She collaborated in the writing of 46 books and pamphlets. She translated 6 books and edited in all 12 periodicals during her life time.⁹⁰ Most of her writings, pamphlets and books, were published from Theosophical Publishing House⁹¹ and Vasanta Press which she started in

- 89 The Theosophical convention of 1883 (Adyar) resolved that "A medal to be annually awarded named 'the Subba Rao Medal' to any Fellow of the Theosophical Society who would produced the best essay on any of the following subjects:
1. Aryan Occult Science and Philosophy,
 2. Buddhist Esoteric Philosophy,
 3. Chaldean Esoteric Science and Philosophy and Zoroastran
 4. Jenush Kabla and Esoteric Interpretation of the Christian Religion.

The fund was constituted in 1884 with the first donation being Rs.100/- by a Master. The awardies of this Medal were.

Year	Name	Year	Name
1883	P.Srinivasa Rao	1909	Dr. Rondolf Steiner
1888	H.P.Bai vatsky	1911	J.Krishnamurthy
1895	Dr . Annie Besant	1912	F.Otto. Schrader
1896	A. P . Sinnet	1913	C.Jinarajadasa
1897	C.W.Leadbeater	1923	P.Narayana Sinha
1898	C.R.S.Mead	1924	Ennest Wood
1899	W.Scot t .Elliot	1925	Dr. J. J. Vander Leuand
1900	Bhagavandas	1934	Helena Pissareva
1906	Dr . T. Paseal		

Source: Josephie Ransone, A History of Theosophical Society, Op.Cit., p.190.

90 *A History of Theosophy and The Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit.,

91 Originally started as the Theosophist Office its work has steadily increased in the field of publication of Theosophical and allied books. In 1913 its name was changed as The Theosophical

1909.⁹²

A study of the multifaceted activities of Annie Besant shows how she put in sincere effort to bring about a change in Indian society by clubbing indigenous morals with western methods of operation. This trait of her personality was reflected in all activities in India. By the time she set her foot in India in 1883, she was already an experienced politician and a thorough Theosophist. In India, she was more a philosopher-politician than a mere social and religious activist. This is borne out of the fact that all her endeavours in India, either social or religious or political invariably included elements of Theosophy and refined moral preaching based on Theosophical principles of universal brotherhood. Her writings, speeches and public activities further attest to this. Dr. Annie Besant's personality was such an integral part of the fundamental principles of Theosophy, that we cannot separate them whenever we try to assess her contributions to society in India.

Publishing House. It was closely associated with the Theosophical Publishing House in London, and Wheaton (USA).

⁹² In 1909 a Private Press started by Dr. Besant with all equipment brought from England. It was handed over to the Society after her death, together with the building which she had constructed for it, in accordance with her will. The name 'Vasanta' is the Indianised form for Besant. See details: *The Hand Book of Theosophical Society*. Op.Cit., pp.81-82.

CHAPTER - V

SPREAD OF THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Theosophical Society was one of the movements launched in the world with a definite purpose for the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. It was a vast organisation spread all over the world comprising of different nationalities, races, cultures and faiths. The Society brought into intimate relationship with people, having different temperaments, and working in different fields of human endeavour. It worked with harmonious onness to promote tolerance and cooperation under the guidance of the elder brethren.

At the beginning, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott proposed to start a society for the investigation of the science and religion. That Society was to be an enquiry of the true religion and scientific materialism. It led to a form of nucleus idea and enlightend intelligent who were willing to contribute for the collection and diffusion of knowledge and to organise a society of Occultists. It started a library to disseminate information concerning the secret Laws of Nature which were so familiar to the ancient faiths.¹

At the meeting on 8 September 1875 in New York, Col. Olcott was elected as Chairman, and another sixteen members gave their names as

¹ H.S. Olcott, *Old Diary Laves* (First Series), Vol.1, (1874-1879), TPH, Adyar, Madras, 1974. pp. 119-120.

belonging to the Society.² Another meeting was held on 13 September 1875, and resolved that the society's name was proposed as *The Theosophical Society* under chairmanship of H.S. Olcott. The preamble and by laws were drawn on 30 October, 1875. The Society met again at Mott Memorial Hall, in New York on 17th November 1875, and the inaugural address of the Theosophical Society was delivered by Col.H.S.Olcott, who was elected as the president of the society. Therefore, 17 November every year is celebrated world over as the "founders day" of the Society.³

The basic tenant of Theosophical Society was to promote the universal brotherhood. In order to achieve that, the society tried to spread the message of humanity and universal fraternity throughout the world.⁴ The Theosophical Society recognised that the largest number of men and women of every religion and every race might join in promoting the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.⁵

2 The Sixteen members were: W.L. Alden, Mrs. Emma Harginge Britten, Dr. W.Britten, John Storer Cobb, George H.Felt, William Quar Judge, D.E. De Lara, Charls Carton Massey, Herbert D.Monachesi Henry J.Newton, Dr.Seth Pancoast, Charles Southeran, Judge K.B.

See for Details, Josephine Ransome, *A Short History of Theosophical Society*,Op.Cit., pp. 110-115.

3 H.P. Balvatsky *Tibet and Tulku*, Madras, 1969, p.51 and see also H.S. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves (1874-78) First series*, Op.Cit, p. 135.

4 Letter No.6, *The Mahatma Letters to A.P.Sinnet*, Adyar (Madras)1962, p.24.

5 Jinarajadasa *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society* Madras, 1925, p.1.

Theosophical Society's main idea was to carry on Theosophy. The word Theosophy is derived from two Greek words, *Theos* (God) and *Sophos* (Wisdom) which mean 'Divine Wisdom'.⁶ The wisdom that asserts the possibility of Knowledge of God. Theosophy lies in the true conception of the plan of God, in the proper understanding of the purpose of life. It is unlimited wisdom and considered a vision of truth. The truth which is in Theosophy should profoundly modify the attitude to the people, things and events.

Theosophy is the Wisdom, which seeks not the welfare of any particular section of a society. It does not pose itself to be the only true religion, but, on the contrary, it tries to find out the basic truth of all religions. Theosophy wields no sword to spread its truth from pole to pole but appeals to reason and conscience of all men.⁷

Theosophy cannot be expressed in hard dogma. The society itself is the embodiment of the principle of Tolerance. It asks the members to have an open mind in the pursuit of truth and leave them free to adhere to any religion they profess on the simple assumption that they will recognise the human brotherhood which underlines.⁸ Hence, the main motto of

⁶ An article on 'What is Theosophy' in the first issue of *The Theosophist* (October, 1879), Vol.1. No.1, Bombay, 1879. p.2.

⁷ *The Theosophic Thinker* Vol.11, No. 19, May, 1894. Bellary, 1894, p. 149.

⁸ A paper on 'The Theosophical Movement' read by A.P. Sinnet at London Lodge on 10th June, 1885. See, for details: *The Theosophist*, Vol.6, NO. 12. September, 1885, Madras, 1885, p.297.

Theosophical Society is that: "There is no religion higher than truth"⁹ In fact, the Theosophy is defined as a synthesis of the essential truths of religion, science and philosophy. It is proclaimed that it is the common sources of all religions, so that, any person seeing that all religions are branches from a single tree and have the same teachings may understand and desire inspiration from inner hidden meaning of his own particular faith. It confined with pure thoughts, pure words and pure deeds. Theosophy can bring the people of all nations, races and religions from all over the world into close touch with each other and might join in the world of promoting the idea of universal brotherhood.¹⁰ The Theosophical Society was to bring together true nature of man and universe. It is dedicated to the promotion of brotherhood and encouragement of the study of religion, philosophy and science and stood for complete freedom of individual search and belief. Theosophical Society, emerged as a society with objects specified in a constitution and in order that every one might join to promote brotherhood. The chief objectives of the society are:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.¹¹

⁹ Rukmini Devi *My Theosophy*, Adyar, n.d. p.1.

¹⁰ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.14, New York, 1987, pp.464-465.

¹¹ The objectives of Theosophical Society have been altered from time to time and revised. For nearly thirty years since the last revision in July 1896, the three objects declared in the "Memorandum of Association at the time of incorporation of the

Society Head Quarters in India:

The main desire of the founders of Theosophical Society was to get into contact with Asiatic People.¹² And also an arrangement of vital element would give strength and permanency to the Society by allying it to the Ancient Brotherhood whose lodges were established throughout the world.¹³ This was the reason why the Theosophical Society decided to make alliance with 'Arya Samaj' as an introduction to India. Three years later in 1878, the founders of the Theosophical Society began correspondence with some friends in India.¹⁴ This resulted in the transfer of the Society's Head quarters to Bombay in February 1879. The

society",had remained unchanged, from 1875 to 1896, they have been revised repeatedly. The idea of Brotherhood appeared for the first time in 1878 in connection with the intended amalgamation of the society with the Arya Samaj. The Principles, rules, and By-laws as revised in General Council meeting held at the place of H.H. the Maharaja of Vijayanagaram, Benaras on 17th December 1879. Since 1885, the General Council had revised the three objects four times in 1888, 1890, 1894 and 1896. And finally these three above objects were incorporated at Madras on 3rd April, 1905.

See, for details: C. Jinarajadasa, *The Golden book of the Theosophical Society*, Madras, 1925, p.245.

Also see Ernest Wood, *A Guide to Theosophy*, Madras, 1909, p.9.

- 12 H.S. Olcott. *Old Diary Leaves*, (First Series) 1874-78. Op.Cit., p. 395.
- 13 Josephine, Ransome, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p. 103.
- 14 H.S. Olcott made correspondence between 5th and 9th February 1878 to Moolji Thackersey of Bombay, and to Hurry Chand Chintamon, the President the Bombay Aryasamaj, to organise a branch in India. See for details: Jesephine Ransome : *A Short History of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p. 103.

amalgamation of Arya Samaj to bridge between two cultures such as East and West was effected. In order to achieve this idea, the Theosophical Society and Arya Samaj tried to promote the fraternal relation with the Hindu, the Parsi, the Jain, and the Buddhist. Apart from this, the plan of Theosophical Society was to establish various branches world-wide, to reduce the greater difference between the Red, the Black and the White. The Founder-President, Col.Olcott, clearly stated that idea, when he gave an eloquent lecture on 'The Theosophical Society and its aims' in Bombay in 1879. He opined that: The soul of Aryavarth was to keep vigil within the dormant body, Her splendour will shine, her primitive philosophy was once more be interpreted and it will teach both 'Religion and Science' to an eager world.¹⁵ The Founders believed that the Theosophy in India can cooperate in the dissemination of the philosophical principles of the age old eastern faiths.

Col. Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky came to India in 1879 met Swamy Dayananda Saraswati in Saharanpur in 1879, and discussed the growth of Theosophical Society in India. But differences arose in both societies by 1880.

The Arya Samaj showed male sectarian tendencies, whereas the Theosophical Society stood for non-sectarian issue. It was clearly stated that Theosophy was not a religion but a way of life. It is the ancient

¹⁵ H.S.Olcott lectured at Framji Cowasji Hall, Dhobittallao in Bombay (The Washerman's Quarters) on March 23, 1879.

See for details: Annie Besant (ed.) *The Theosophist* (Olcott Centenary Number) Adyar 1932, pp.542, pp.542-544.

wisdom at the heart of all religions and golden thread which linked them all and guided humanity in its long evolutionary journey.

The Founders had decided to have a permanent residence for Theosophical Society. During their second tour in India, both the founders, H.S.Olcott and H.P. Balvatsky landed in Madras on 23 April, 1882, from Calcutta. On 31 May, they looked at a house 'on the South bank of Adyar River called "Huddleston Gardens" which was for sale.¹⁶ That house consisted of 27 acres, and they immediately bought it. The office of the Theosophical Society was finally shifted to Huddleston Gardens in Adyar on December 19, 1882 which now is the International Head Quarters of the Society. Colonel Olcott was the Founder-President of the Society till he died in 1907. He was succeeded in his office by Dr. Annie Besant.

The coming of Founders to India, was in many ways the real beginning of the movement. A number of cultured Hindus gathered round the Founders and they gave good support for the work which could be organised for development of the movement. In the view of Col. Olcott, Theosophy is primarily service to fellowmen. He strongly felt that if only Indians would properly understand Theosophy, they could uplift their countrymen in a wonderful way. In the first convention which was held in Bombay on 29

¹⁶ The Founders purchased Huddleston Gardens, consisting of 27 acres at a price of Rs.9,000. An amount of Rs.3,500 was advanced by a devotee member P.Iyaloo Naidu. And T. Subba Rao, R. Raghunatha Raw, G. Muttuswamy Chetty, P.Srieenivasa Raw have collected donations from members.

See for details: Jinarajadasa. *The Golden book of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p.69-70.

November 1879. The Founders not only addressed on Theosophy but also on exhibition of Indian arts and crafts.

The Founders strongly felt that "Theosophy could become a power to recon with India's life on national lines once again, if only Indians accepted, as a practical code of life, Theosophy in its entirety, was not merely the intellectual exhilaration which it brings to philosophical minds ¹⁷ In his presidential address to the convention, Col. Olcott spoke on reform in education, organisation of technological schools and the revival of Sanskrit learning.

In order to achieve their aims, the Founders established a journal *The Theosophist*, in 1879. The issues of *The Theosophist* were remarkable in revealing not only the mystical elements underlying Theosophy, but also the intensively practical nature of their application. They published various articles on Theosophy, Technical education, Social and Economic system on national importance which particularly contributed for the growth of the movement in the country.

A passage from *The Theosophist* of 1879, clearly shows India's problem:

If India is ever to be freed from her present humiliation of exporting the raw material and importing it again after manufacture, she must commence by importing to her youth a systematic knowledge of those industrial arts and sciences, the lack of which compels her to purchase in foreign markets goods which should in most

¹⁷ Jinarajadasa (ed.). *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., p. 42.

cases be manufactured to advantage at home. To persist in the present course, while millions of her people are starving for want of employment, is more than a mistake-it is a crime. It is more unpardonable when we consider the characteristics of her labouring class, a people of simple habits, docile and obedient, contented with wages that would not suffice, for a bare subsistence in the west and patient extreme_____That such we believe entirely owing to the lack of technical education; and poorly as most of the Indian work of today is executed, it will inevitably be worse then years hence, unless timely steps are taken to introduce a system of education which, in the future, will not only elevate the Hindu artizan to the level of his western brother, but in some particulars surpass him: a system tending to revive the glories of that ancient time when India held a place in the front rank of Industrial science and art.

After they shifted the Head quarters to Adyar in Madras the movement expanded southwards, particularly in Madras Presidency and Sri Lanka. The Buddhist Priest, Mohottiwatte Gunananda and H. Sumangala of Ceylon,¹⁹ were responsible for the growth of Theosophy in Sri Lanka. The aim of the Founders, especially, H.S. Olcott was to organise the Buddhists, because of the true spirit of essential unity with all other cults. As far Buddhism, his aim was to help to purge away its impurities, restore its pristine beauty, unify its various conflicting schools and sects and diffuse a knowledge of the Hindu-Buddhist doctrines of Karma and reincarnation throughout Christendom.

18 E. Wimbridge's article on 'Technical Education' in *The Theosophist*, Vol.1, No.1, October, 1879, Bombay, 1879, pp.26-27.

19 Mohottowatta Gunananda, the Highest Priest of the temple at Kotahena in Colombo, who had joined the Theosophical Society in 1877. H. Sumangala, The Buddhist priest in Ceylon was Principal of the Vidyodaya College for Buddhists. He was made Vice-President of the Theosophical Society.

See, for details, C. Jinarajadasa, *The Golden Book of Theosophical Society*, Op.Cit., pp.48-49.

Col. Olcott did the Buddhist work as a private individual, yet at the same time in the spirit of a real president of non-sectarian, altruistic and progressive Theosophical Society. The other activity of Col. Olcott was to organise Buddhist schools throughout the country, Ceylon. He travelled from village to village, collecting funds, instituted committees and advised people to spend their money on children-education rather than on to build temples. A revival started in Buddhism, which has progressed steadily because of the efforts of Theosophical Society. There was a powerful Buddhist educational movement to teach Buddhist children in their own faith, as well as to give them a secular education. Col. Olcott concentrated during his life to encourage the revival of religion in all the religions of the world. And also he was keen on the revival of the other religions, like Zoroastrianism.

The Theosophical Society, from the time of its arrival in India in 1879, has always been deeply interested in the spread of Theosophy in India. Col. H.S. Olcott strove for the revival of Indian national feeling by his relentless work for the spread of Theosophy. During his extensive tours great enthusiasm was aroused by his lectures and numerous branches of the society were brought into existence in all parts of the country, more particularly Madras Presidency.²⁰

The President-Founder Col. H.S. Olcott travelled throughout the country and founded many branches to spread Theosophy. The early history

²⁰ *The Theosophist* (February 1891) TPH, Madras 1891, p.285.

of Theosophy in India begins with the establishment Theosophical Lodges (Branches) in North India as well as South. The very first Lodge was the Bombay Theosophical Society formed in 1880. Between 1880 and 1911, many branches were established in North India, such as Berhampur in 1881, Baroda in 1882, Patna in 1882, Lucknow in 1882, Calcutta in 1883, Aligarh in 1883, Beneras in 1885, Agra in 1910 and Cawnpore in 1911.²¹

After shifting the Head Quarters from Bombay to Adyar in Madras, the Theosophy spread throughout the country. A large number of Branches were established and many schools and libraries were organised by Theosophical Societies as a result of H.S. Olcott's tour during 1880-1889. He travelled by rail, sea-boat, budgerow (canal-boat), horse-garry, elephant, horse-back, palanquin and Indian bullack-carts. He travelled some time in night time and covered about 2000 miles during 1882-1883, in Madras presidency. He delivered several lectures based on Theosophy, Science, Philosophy, Aryan literature and Religion. He organised various branches and visited old ones during his tour. Col. Olcott carried daily discussions on philosophy, science and religion with religious priests, Buddhist monks and Indian scholars, during his South Indian tour.²² He visited a number of places like Tinnevely, Trivendrum Nagarcoil, Srivelliputtur, Madura, Nagapatnam, Trichinopoly, Mayavaram, Kumbakonam Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Chinglepet, Ootacamund (Ooty) and other places.

21 General Report of the Forty Seventh Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) December 25-28, 1922. TPH, Adyar, 1923, pp.xi-ixxvi.

22 H.S.Olcott, *Old Dairy Leaves* (Second Series) 1878-83. Op.Cit., p.439.

H.S. Olcott visited Tinnevely on 17th July 1883. He delivered a lecture and he appealed to people for supply of furniture to establish Theosophical library for Hindu boys. He suggested to elders to cultivate and fertile the youth of all mental and moral fields in India.²³ He went to Trivendrum by bullock-cart on 2 August, 1883. He visited Nagarcoil and gave a lecture. He visited Srivilliputtur and formed a Theosophical branch. He went to Madura and gave a lecture to an audience of 2000.²⁴ He moved to Nagapatnam and gave an eloquent lecture to about 3,000 people.

Col. Olcott visited Trichinopoly on 8 August 1883. He delivered a lecture on "Hinduism and the necessity for the religious education of Young" He established a local branch of Theosophical Society.²⁵ He visited Tanjore, gave lecture and visited world renowned Sanskrit library in the Royal Palace which contained 35,000 Palm leaf and other manuscripts and 7,000 bound volumes. He travelled to Kumbakonam, where he delivered a lecture on 'Religion and Science', in Srirangapani temple to an audience of 3,000. He formed a new branch and collected a fund for a local library. The Hindu revival began to spread all over India and lead to various branches of the society and sprang into being as the back bone of the Indian National movement by his relentless work.²⁶ He gave a lecture

23 Ibid. p.443.

24 Ibid. p.448.

25 Ibid. p.457.

26 Ibid. p.450.

at Mayavaram at Mayuranatha Temple and a branch was formed by him.²⁷ He visited Coimbatore and lectured on 19 September 1883. He organised a local branch under the name of the Coimbatore Theosophical Society.²⁸ He also visited Cuddlore, Chinglepat, and Ootacumand and gave a series of lectures to strengthen Theosophy.

Apart from, these Col. Olcott made also an extensive tour in Andhra. He visited Vijayanagaram and gave a lecture at college hall where a branch was organised. He gave two public addresses at Kakinada and proceeded to Rajahmundry. Col. Olcott formed a Branch in Ellore called 'the Gupta Vidya Theosophical Lodge' on 24 September 1887. He visited Bezwada Masulipatnam and Guntur. During his visit to Guntur, it is interesting to note that, the local Sanskrit English School founded by C. Sambaiah Chetty, Fellow of Theosophical Society (FTS) collected thousand rupees towards its permanent endowment. The roster contains the names of 193 scholars.²⁹ He delivered another interesting lecture on Theosophy.³⁰ He visited Adoni on 30 September 1883. He addressed an interesting and instructive lecture to a large gathering. He made a strong impression on the importance of the study of Aryan Philosophy and Religion. He

27 Ibid, p.462.

28 H.S.O. *Old Diary Leaves*. Vol.HI, 1883-87, Op.Cit., P.11.

29 Supplement to the Theosophist, *The Theosophist* Vol.IX, No.98, November, 1887, TPH, Madras, 1887, pp.i-ii.

30 Supplement to the Theosophist *The Theosophist*, Vol.5, No.50, November, 1883, TPH, Madras 1883, p. 15.

organised a branch under the name of 'the Adoni Theosophical Society'³¹

Col. Olcott went on a tour to Hyderabad (Deccan) State in October 1883. He visited Bolurum, Secunderabad and Hyderabad branches. Col. Olcott delivered an elaborate lecture on Theosophy near Hussain Sagar.

The growth and spread of the Theosophical Society was one of the most important agencies for the national regeneration of India. In order to achieve this, the society was to gather, guide and direct and re-awaken the spiritual-forces of the nation, and to develop among the Indians for a clear consciousness of brotherly solidarity, despite all differences in caste creed, sect or race and to train them in a school of practical cooperation in spiritual and philanthropic effort.³² In this direction, Col. Olcott has accomplished the splendid work in the country. One of the most potent factors in moulding India's present and future was the influence of western thought, education and habits upon its more intelligent and better educated classes. The Theosophical Society, the western element in it, exercised in reviving and stimulating interest in spiritual matters among the English educated classes.³³

³¹ Ibid. p.16.

³² *The Theosophist* (February 1891) Op.Cit., p.284.

³³ *The Theosophist*, Vol.xii, No.3, December 1810, TPH, Madras, 1890, pp. 148-150.

It was clearly stated in *The Mirror* in 1889, that the Theosophical Movement in India was the fore-runner of the more recent political movements which symbolised the National Congress. There can be no doubt that Theosophy along with other forces sowed seeds of nationalism.³⁴

It is to be noted that, when the National Congress was planned, the seeds of it were planted by the Theosophical Society in 1884. It was the Theosophical convention of that year and a small group of 17 earnest Theosophists deeply concerned for political future of the country, aroused to a sense of her past powers by the awakening crusades of H.P. Blavatsky and H.S. Olcott, that strove to educate self respect for the nation. In order to achieve that aim, a meeting was held in Adyar, which declared to make an effort to bring about her political redemption and India's ancient respect. These members of the convention, decided to begin a national movement for the saving of the motherland. These were delegates to the Theosophical convention from Calcutta, Bombay, Beneras, Allahabad, Bengal Oudh, North West Provinces and Madras.³⁵

Many Branches of the society flourished from 1882 onwards in Madras, Presidency and Andhra region. The main centres in Madras Presidency were Adyar, Ambasamudram, Annamalai, Anantapur, Adoni, Bellary, Calicut, Chidambaram, Chingleput, Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Chittore, Cuddapah,

³⁴ Supplement to *The Theosophist* July 1897, TPH, Madras, 1897, pp.246-247.

³⁵ Annie Besant *The Future of Indian Politics*. Op.Cit., pp.25-27 and also see, Annie Besant *How India brought for Freedom*, Op.Cit., p.2.

Dindigal, Guntoor, Kumbakonam, Lalgudi, Madras, Mayavaram, Mylapore, Madanapalle, Nagapatnam, Nellore, Palghat, Pollachi, Pondicherry, Puttur Proddutore, Srivelliputtur, Srivaikuntam, Siddhavatam, Tanjore, Tindivanam, Tinnevely, Trichinopoly, Trivendrum, Tuticorin, Tadipatri, Vellore and other places. Apart from Andhra region were concerned, Amalapuram, Bolarum, Bezwada, Coconada, Eluru, Gotty, Guntakal, Guntoor, Hyderabad, (Deccan) Kurnool, Masulipatnam, Rajahmundry, Secunderabad, Vijayanagaram, Warangal and other places.³⁶

The above branches were engaged in organising various Sanskrit Schools, establishment of free dispensaries, hospitals, libraries, running reading rooms, teaching of moral education and the spread of Theosophy.

Above all, the main contribution of Theosophical Society was the spread education. In order to achieve this, many Branches established schools to promote Sanskrit literature, moral education and to protect ancient faiths on Theosophical lines. A Sanskrit School was founded at Adoni. This school was run under the auspicious of the Adoni Theosophical Society which was formed in 1882. It has secured the patronage of the officials and of the merchants and the people. An amount of Rs.130/- was deposited in the Savings Bank in its name. The Adoni Sanskrit School consisted of 25 students on its roll.³⁷ This school was striving for the

³⁶ See, Branches of the Theosophical Society (Indian Section) General Report of the fifteenth Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society held at Adyar, Madras on 27-28, 29 December 1890. *The Theosophist* (January 1891) and *The Theosophist* (February 1891) Op.Cit., p.284.

³⁷ Supplement to the Theosophist, *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, No.85, October 1886, Madras, 1886, p.i.

Col.Olcott, from the very beginning started the Olcott Free Panchama schools for education of the Panchama castes. He always strove for the upliftment of the underprivileged classes of the society. Therefore, he himself started a school in 1894, later a number of panchama schools were established by the Theosophical Society. These schools functioned under Theosophical Educational Trust. The Olcott Free Panchama School was started in Adyar. The strength of this school was 151. H.P.B. Free School situated at Kodambokam had a total students of 76. The Damodar Free school at Teynampet consisted of 200 students. The Thiruvallvar Free School at Mylapore consisted of 83 students and at the Annie Besant Free School at Krishnam Pet, the total strength was 705.³⁹ A number of educational institutions were established in various places in Madras presidency and Andhra region. The P.U.C. Higher Elementary School was established in 1895 in Vayalpadu. The National High School was founded in 1904 in Prodduttore. The Sanmarga Sanskrit School was established in 1889 in Bellary. The English Panchama School was founded in Nellore. Sri Dandapani National High School was established in 1914 in Palni, and a Higher Grade Elementary School was established in Tindivanam in 1902. Sree Meenakshi Vidhyalaya in Madura was established in 1904; Sree

³⁸ General Report of 12 Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society, December 27-29, 1887. Supplement to the *The Theosophist*, Vol. IX, No. 100, (January 1888) Adyar, 1888, p.xxv.

³⁹ *Theosophical Educational Trust Reports*, 1917. Op.Cit., pp.31-32.

Saraswathi Patasala was established in Kumbakonam in 1908. The Naryana Gowndawar Theosophical Girls School was founded in Coimbatore in 1906. The Hindu Girls High School in Lalgudi was founded in 1899 and the Olcott panchama school was founded in Madras in 1894.⁴⁰

All the above schools were run by Theosophical Educational Trust. The branches of these places also made extensive work for the spread of Theosophy through the establishment of educational institutions. They organised schools, reading rooms and guided to promote Sanskrit literature and Theosophical Education. The method of instruction of these schools were religious instruction which was imparted by respective faiths, training of Indian handicrafts and cultivating the patriotic spirit among the students.

The Founders had first opened Theosophical Branches at Madras, Nellore and came to Guntoor on 15 May 1882, where the Krishna Theosophical Society was organised on 17 May 1882. Three Sanskrit Schools were opened under auspices of Krishna Theosophical Branch. One at Guntoor, another at Amaravathi and the third at Vinukonda. With a view to encourage female education, the Branch had also opened two Girl's schools under its patronage. The main subjects taught at this school were an elementary treatise on Hindu morals and religion. This Branch arranged weekly meetings and discourses on Theosophy and Indian Mythology. A good

⁴⁰ *Theosophical Educational Trust Reports*, 1917, Op.Cit, p.7-8.

library which contained Theosophical and other works, and useful books for the public was also set up. *The Theosophist*, the able organ of communication of the Theosophical Society, which gave information regarding the noble objects and working of Theosophy was kept for the reading public. It contributed to promote the scientific truths of the Aryan philosophy and wisdom.⁴¹

A Sanskrit school which was called the 'Vidya Daskshinamurthy Sanskrit School' was established at Hindupur near Ananthapur. The school was run in a very satisfactory manner under Anantapur Branch.⁴² This Branch made good work in the spread of Theosophical movement and to study 'Gyana Vasistam' a Sanskrit work.⁴³ Another school was established at Bellary under 'the Bellary Sanmarga Samaj'. This school organised a free Sanskrit school and conducted moral classes. This school taught special subjects such as logic, Raghuvamsm, Hittopadeshm, Panchathantram and Naishadam. Special classes were arranged for the Adwaita and Vishista Adwaita of Sankaracharya and Ramanujacharya sects.⁴⁴

41 Supplement to *The Theosophist* Vol.4, No.42, March 1883, Madras 1883, p.1. and see also supplement to *The Theosophist* May 1891. TPH, Madras, 1891, pp.ixiv-ixv.

42 Supplement to the *Theosophist*, Vol.x, No.109, (October, 1888) Adyar 1888. p. xx.

43 General Report of the 11th Convention and Anniversary of of Theosophical Society, Adyar, December 27-30, 1886. Supplement to *The Theosophist* (January 1887) Vol.viii, No.88, 1887, Madras, p.xxiii.

44 Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.ix, No.99, December, 1887, Madras, 1887, p.vii.

Splendid work was done by the Gupta Vidya Theosophical Society which was situated at Eluru. This branch organised an Educational trust called 'The Theosophical Educational Committee'. A Higher grade and secondary grade Training School and an Elementary school were successfully run under this branch. This branch had also good library which consisted of various books on Theosophy, Aryan literature, medicine, old manuscripts and other books.⁴⁵

The Chingleput Theosophical Society was formed in Chingleput on 7 January 1883. This Society worked for the spread of Theosophy.⁴⁶ The Cuddalore Theosophical Society was formed in Cuddalore on 9 January 1883. This society strove for universal brotherhood and worked to promote the moral well-being and spiritual interests of fellow-men. The meetings of the society were held on every Saturday. They discussed on religion, Theosophic ideals and the ways to strengthen the movement.⁴⁷

The Madura Theosophical Society was formed on 10 January 1883.⁴⁸ This society made an effective work to the growth of the movement. The members of the society arranged weekly meetings on Theosophy and religion.

45 *Divyajana Samaja Darshini* (Telugu) Telugu Federation, Gunturu, 1970, pp. 28-29.

46 Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.4, No.41. (February 1883) Madras, 1883, p.2.

47 Supplement to *The Theosophist* Vol.4. No.44. (May-1883). Madras, 1883, p.5

48 Supplement to the *The Theosophist* Vol.4, No.41, Op.Cit., p.2.

The Chittor Theosophical Society had a Sanskrit School which consisted of 90 students.⁴⁹ This Branch was established in 1884. The society made good work to spread Theosophy. A committee for four members was organised to make occasional visits to the important places in the districts with a view to ascertaining the history of the society and to give clear information about the Theosophical Society and its aims to the public.⁵⁰ The school was run in satisfactory manner.

The Coimbatore Theosophical Society had a Girls school under the name of The Marana Gownder Theosophical Girl's School. It was established by TET in 1906. The school was open to students of all faiths. Religious and moral instruction were taught, on Theosophical lines.⁵¹

The Cuddapah Theosophical Society was established in 1886. Col. Olcott visited this branch on 20th December 1886. During his stay he lectured on Theosophy and Theosophical Society and Man and Future.⁵² Meetings were held on every Sunday. The important works discussed were : Esoteric-Buddhism and other Theosophical literature. The President of

49 Supplement to the *The Theosophist* Vol.6, No.12, September, 1888. Adyar, 1886, p.224.

50 General Report of the 11th Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society, Adyar, December 27-30, 1886. See for details: Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Jan.1887, Vol.viii, No.88, Madras, 1887. p.xxlii.

51 *Theosophical Educational Trust Reports*. 1917, p.31.

52 Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.iii, No.87, December 1886, Madras 1886, p.xi.

this Branch, Pandit Basha Charya has compiled an excellent catechism on Vasistha-Adwaitha and also an elaborate genealogy of the Solar and Lunar races.

The Kurnool Theosophical Society was formed on 12 December 1883 by H.S. Olcott. This society had an excellent collection of books and journals and organised a good reading room.⁵³

One of the prominent centres in South India was the Jignasa Theosophical Society in Madanapalle, which was started in 1891. This branch arranged weekly meetings and organised the lectures on Theosophical lines. The society spread Theosophy under active workers like O.L. Sharma, R. Seshagiri Rao and R. Giri Rao. Madanapalle was considered as a Theosophical educational centre. Two educational institutions such as the Theosophical College and High School were established in 1887. The National Preparatory classes institution established in 1917. The Theosophical Elementary School was started in 1887. And the Olcott Panchama School was established in 1914. This branch had a good library consisting of 187 volumes and several journals and books on Theosophy. This library arranged special classes for advanced students to train them as good citizens.⁵⁴

The Nellore Theosophical Society was formed in 1882. Weekly meetings were arranged throughout the year. This Society organised public lectures

53 Supplement to the Theosophist, *The Theosophist*, Vol.1, No.1, (January 1884), Adyar 1884, p.8.

54 *The Prosnottara*, Vol.xiii, No.1-2 (Jan-Feb.) 1903, Benaras. 1903, pp. 1-xxxii.

on Theosophy during every month. The branch strove for revival of Sanskrit. In order to achieve this branches were established in Nellore and in Venkatagiri. Above all, a Sanskrit primary class has attached to a Local Fund School in each of the Taluqs of the district. A Sanskrit school was also started at Butchireddipalem by Puttah Kodandarama Reddi, a member of the society.⁵⁵ This branch had a good library which consisted of about 90 volumes and pamphlets based on spiritualism, Mesmarism, philosophy and Theosophy.⁵⁶ This Branch was also taking translation work on Sankaracharya's commentaries and Bhagavadgita.

Another Sanskrit School had been running successfully in Gooty in Anantapur District. The Students were taught all religious texts and 'Kavyams' and they recited slokams and hymns. This school worked for the revival of Sanskrit literature and strove for the growth of Theosophy.⁵⁷ Apart from this, a Theosophical Branch was established in Gooty in 1883. There had been informal meetings of members for the discussion of Theosophical topics almost every evening. A society 'Hindu Janabhakta Sabha' was formed under the auspices of this society. This society organised discussions in the vernacular on religious and social questions and lectures were delivered on puranas and Upanishads.⁵⁸

55 Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.5, No.19, October 1883, Adyar 1883. p.7.

56 Supplement to *The Theosophist*, May 1891, (Adyar 1891) 1891. pp.lxiv-lxv.

57 *The Theosophist*, Vol.viii, No.92 (May 1887) Adyar 1887, pp.xcm-xcvii.

58 General Report of the 11th Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society, December 27-30, 1886. See, supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.VIII. No.88, Jan.1887, Madras 1887,

The Gooty Branch was fortunate to have the services of a prominent political leader of the day. Gooty Keshava Pillai who was known as 'Dheenabandhu of South India' was attracted towards Theosophy. Keshava Pillai and other leading citizens of the town welcomed the mission, when Col. Olcott visited Gooty in 1884. He sensed an intellectual freedom and moral elevation in the cosmopolitan brotherhood. Keshava Pillai had also attended the Theosophical convention held at Adyar in Madras in 1884. Later on his activities were connected with the friendship of Dr. Annie Besant.⁵⁹

The Anantapur Theosophical Society was established in 1885. The President Founder Col. H.S. Olcott visited this Branch in December 1885 and delivered an eloquent lecture on Theosophy. His visit created a great enthusiasm for the strengthening of the movement.⁶⁰ This Branch used to hold weekly meetings throughout the year. The main discussions of weekly meetings were on Theosophy and revival of Hinduism.⁶¹ This society rendered social service to the public. Rice and money were distributed to more than 200 people at every anniversary day.⁶²

pp.xxii-xxm.

- 59 P. Damodaran Pillai. *Gooty Kesava Pillai State Archives*, Hyderabad, 1978. p.67.
- 60 Supplement to the *Theosophist* Vol.111, No.73, (October 1885) Adyar 1885, p.xvi.
- 61 General Report of the 12th Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, December 27-29, 1887. Supplement to *The Theosophist* Vol.ix, No.100, January 1888. Adyar 1887, P.xxv.
- 62 General Report of the 13th Convention and Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Dec. 27-29, 1888. *The Theosophist*,

The Bellary Theosophical Society was formed on 27-December 1882.⁶³ This society made good work for the spread of Theosophy, regular meetings were held on every Sunday. And also another society called 'The Bellary Sanmarga Samaj' was started on 7th April 1887.⁶⁴

The aim of the Bellary Samaj was to improve the moral and temporal standards in the society. The society had the following three main objectives:

- a. To spread enlightenment in Society, that is beneficial to the people.
- b. To improve moral standards among the members of the public and
- c. To improve the mutual human relations, philanthropic ideas etc. among the members.⁶⁵

Its aim was also to publish books, to arrange specific lectures on different topics, to establish a library, to establish reading room and to establish poor-feeding society. An interesting fact is that a Telugu monthly journal called *Sanmarga Bodhini* was published by the Bellary Sanmarga Branch. This journal published various articles for the spread of Theosophy and news on national importance. The Bellary Branch played an active role in social reform. This Branch arranged poor-feeding programmes. A separate Managing Committee had formed for 'Famine Relief

Vol.x, No.112, January 1889, Adyar 1889, p.13.

⁶³ Supplement to *The Theosophist*, Vol.x, No.112, January 1889, Adyar 1889. P.O.

⁶⁴ Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Vol.ix, No.101, February 1888, Madras, 1888, P.lxxiii.

⁶⁵ *Sanmarga Bodhini* (Telugu Journal), 3 July, Bellary, (Supplement to the *Sanmarga Bodhini*).

Fund' during 1897-98. It collected donations from Theosophical members and gave financial assistance to the poor.⁶⁶ The Sanmarga Samaj of Bellary also arranged free meal programme.

The Kakinada Lodge was established on 10th May 1885.⁶⁷ This lodge made good work for strengthening the Theosophical movement. This society

66 The Famine condition in Bellary District are playing havoc with lives of the people. The severity and intensity of these conditions bigger any description. Though the Government established a few 'feeding centres', but they failed in catering to the need of all for ex: The Zenana ladies from Muslim families do not go to these centres. Some of the members of sudra families, who earlier rolled in luxuries and who later have been reduced to rags, also do not visit these centres. In order to alleviate this miseries of these people the Sanmarga Samaj established a Theosophical Famine Relief Fund.' A managing committee of the Relief Fund has been formed with following members: Sindidi Mari Siddappa, Sindidi Gavappa Golakonda, Krishnappa, Kolachalam Venkata Rao, and R. Jagannadhaiah (Secretary). The following members liberally devoted to the Relief Fund and details are as follows:

SI. NO.	Name	Rs.	Anna	Paise
1.	Ponnuwamy Pillai (Ongole)	25	0	0
	I.Venkata Krishna Rao	20	0	0
2.	(Masulipatnam)			
	P. Nageswara Rao Panthulu	2	40	0
3.	(Masulipatnam)			
	C.B. Bhakthavastala Naidu	0	40	0
4.	(Masulipatnam			

The Beneras Branch of Theosophical Society has promised to donate Rs. 50.

See for details: *Sanmarga Bodhini* (Telugu Journal) 31st July 1897, Bellary, 1897, pp.246-247.

67 The land of Kakinada Lodge was donated by Sri Neelam Thirupathi Raidu which consisted of 2480 Sq. meters. And this building was renovated by the members of the society and citizens of town in 1991, and named as 'Gowthama Lodge on 10 October 1911. After a few years in 1934, a upstairs constructed with the help of C.T.D. shores. One room used for prayer hall and the remaining place for co-masinary in upstairs.

See for details: *Divya Jaana Samaj a Darshini*, Op.Cit., p.20.

had managing committee which consisted of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Joint Secretary. The general meeting was held on every alternate Sundays and discussions were held on Theosophy, Aryan literature and Science also carrying general purpose of the society. This Branch had a library consisting of useful books on Theosophy, Aryan literature, science and other books.⁶⁸

The Bezwada Theosophical Society was organised by H.S. Olcott on 29 September 1887.⁶⁹ This Society organised regular meetings on every Sunday. Important discussions were made on Bhagvadgita, and Theosophical subjects.⁷⁰ The Theosophical ideas spread into and other villages by relentless work of the members.⁷¹

Col Olcott also visited Masulipatam and a Theosophical Branch was formed on 6 October 1887.⁷² This branch arranged discussions on every

68 Rules of Coconada Theosophical Society, Supplement to the *Theosophist* Vol.6, NO.10, (July 185) Madras 1885, p.252 and also see. Supplement to the *Theosophist* Vol.ix, NO.106, (July 1886) Madras 1888. p.xlvi.

69 Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Vol.ix, No.98 (November 1887) Madras 1887. pp. i-ii.

70 Proceedings of Theosophical Society, Bezwada held on 29 March 1891. See for details: Supplement to *The Theosophist* Vol.xii, No.10, July 1891, Adyar, 1891. p.xci.

71 *Theosophy in Inida* (Prosnottara) Vol.1, No.3. March 1904, Beneras 1904, pp. 1-3.

72 Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Vol.ix, NO.98, November 1887, Madras 1887, p.vi.

week. A systematic instruction made by a Sanskrit Pandit on Mahabharata Sundarakanda of Ramayana, Hindu-Logic and Vedanta to the members of the society. This branch had a library which consisted of 150 Theosophical publications.⁷³ A Girls High School also had been opened by the President of the Society. Religious instruction was the main plank of this school.⁷⁴

Hyderabad Theosophical Society:

The Hyderabad Theosophical Society was formed at Hyderabad (Deccan) on 17th December 1882. This Society arranged weekly meetings and discussed principal subjects like Theosophy, the existence of God, the conservation of thought, Mahatmas and Avatars, the influence of great minds, The Yoga and Vedanta systems, Tanzil and Tashbih, sufism and karma.⁷⁵ A Free Reading room was organised on 8th May 1894, named *Anna Bai*.⁷⁶ It was situated in the premises of Theosophical Branch. It was open free to the public in the morning and evening every day. Most of the Theosophical journals and reviews and also non-Theosophic papers like, *The Hindu*, *The Budget*, *the Evening Mail*, *the Hyderabad* etc., were made available. The Theosophical readings and discussions were held every Wednesday while lectures on Theosophical subjects delivered on every

73 General Report of 12 Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society Adyar December 27-29, 1887. Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Op.Cit., p.xxi.

74 Supplement to *The Theosophist* (March 1891) Adyar 1891. p.xxxvii.

75 General Report of the 12 Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society. Adyar, December 27-29, 1887. Supplement to the *Theosophist* Vol. ix. No.100, January 1888, Adyar, p.xxv.

76 Dr. Besant called 'Anna Bai'.

Sunday. A Sanskrit School was organised by the members of the Society. The Secunderabad Theosophical Society was formed on 25th December 1882. This society made good work for the spread of Theosophy.⁷⁹ Another Branch called the Bolarum Theosophical Society at Bolarum (Deccan) was started on 25th December 1882. This Branch was constituted with the following three objectives:⁸⁰

- a. To promote the study of ancient Aryan religion.
- b. To promote the moral regeneration of the community and
- c. To cultivate the feelings of Universal Brotherhood.

This society consisted of a president, a secretary and a treasurer. This branch arranged weekly meetings on every Sunday and lectures delivered in vernacular and English on Theosophical lines.

Rajahmundry Theosophical Society:

The Rajahmundry Theosophical Society was one of the oldest Branches in South India. It was founded by the President-Founder, Col. Olcott on 7th October, 1887. The prominent persons like Nyapathi Subba Rao Pantulu, Kurecheti Ramabrahman, Veluri Venkata Ramaiah, Balejepalli Shivaramaiah

77 *The Theosophic Thinker*, (Sat, June 9, 1894) Vol.11. NO.23. Bellary, 1894, p. 183.

78 General Report of the 11th Convention and Anniversary of Theosophical Society. Adyar. December 27-29, 1886. Supplement to *Theosophist*, Vol.viii. NO.88, January 1887, Adyar 1887, p.xxiii.

79 Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Vol.4, No.41. February 1883. Madras 1883. p.2.

80 Supplement to *The Theosophist*. Vol.4, N.41. February 1883, Madras. p.2.

and others were members of the society. They arranged weekly meetings, and discussions on Theosophical lines were organised in a thatched house. After a few years Dr. Besant inaugurated a building for the society on 29th March 1916 and opened this building on 5th April 1929. This society made splendid work for the spread of Theosophy.⁸¹

Visakhapatnam Theosophical Society:

The Visakhapatnam Lodge was established on 23rd September 1887. This branch building was inaugurated by Dr. Besant on 16th March 1926. This society rendered social service to the public. In 1962 an education centre called 'Vasantha Children School' was established by Chaganti Sankara Rao. This school gave moral education, religious and spiritual ideas to the children. This Branch also organised a Tailoring Centre and provided medical aid to the public. This Branch had an excellent collection of books and a reading room.⁸²

The Theosophical Society has not only established branches in various places in Andhra, but the splendid work done by the Society such as the establishment of free dispensaries, hospitals, organising schools, spread of moral education, Sanskrit, ancient faiths on Theosophical lines, was commendable.⁸³

81 *Divya Jnana Samaja Dasshini* (Telugu Federation) Op.Cit, p.27.

82 *Ibid.* pp. 12-13.

83 *The Theosophist* February 1891, Adyar 1891, p.284.

The Indian Theosophists worked vigorously to revive the spirit of Indian culture, strove for social reform and political reconstruction. The Members of the society made extensive tour in Andhra and delivered lectures for the growth of Theosophy. Betram Keightly⁸⁴ visited various places in Andhra such as Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Ballary, Gooty, Cuddapah and other places. During his visit to Hyderabad, he observed the combination of Parsi and Hindu elements in the city. He gave a regeneration and national consciousness by a series of lectures. He strongly felt that "Every nation of the past was built by individual citizen of the country". He added that the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion, that India must be reborn as a nation and she is ever to be alive again as she has lived in the past. He said that Theosophy helps to the growth of spirituality, reawakening of the inner spiritual life and thought of the greatness of the past and the lofty ideals of its teachings.⁸⁵

Betram Keightley advised all members of the society to explore the ancient literature and glory of the past, by organising the Theosophical conferences. He guided all members that to improve the vernacular language and speak to them in their own language which they can understand. And every branch made an example of 'service-centre' based on needs of the people. He strongly felt that when the Theosophist fulfill

⁸⁴ Betram Keightley had served as General Secretary of Theosophical Society for India between 1890 and 1897. He made an extensive tour in India and visited places like Bombay, Ahmadabad, Borada, Suratd and in Andhra during 1890-1891.

⁸⁵ *The Theosophist* Vol. xii, No.3, December 1890. Adyar 1890, pp.148-150.

the need of the society, that is real growth of society.⁸⁶ The branch meetings should open to all and discussions must be instructive to the public as well as to members by providing attractive and valuable material for discussion and thought. The monthly journals like *Theosophist*, *Prosnotara* were also submitted. Every member was to explore the Hindu philosophy, religion and custom and elucidate them into interchange of thoughts.

India is the fountain head of spiritual philosophy, the ancient glory, Indian science and arts were buried in palm-leaf and other manuscripts. A good work made in translations into English, Sanskrit and vernaculars. It will help to blossom the real Indian Identity throughout the world.⁸⁷

Another Theosophical worker, C. Kotaiah was the Fellow of Theosophical Society and Inspector of Theosophical Branches, in Andhra Region. He made an extensive tour for the spread of Theosophy. He had visited various branches in Andhra such as, Cuddapah, Tadipatri, Adoni, Ananthapur, Gooty, Bellary, Kurnool, Hyderabad (Deccan) Secunderabad, Boluram, Bezwada, Ellore, Rajahmundry, Coconada, Vizagapatam, Vijayanagaram, Masulipatam, Guntoor, Ongole, Kondukur, Kanigiri, Udaigiri, Butchireddipalem and Nellore, during 1891.

The Theosophical movement spread by the extensive tours of Col. Olcott in Andhra. He visited and inspected the work of each branch. He met all members of the society and made discussions with local-members of

86 Ibid. pp.282-283.

87 Ibid. p.284.

the branch and gave clear idea about Theosophy. C. Kotaiah delivered a series of lectures on Theosophic lines. He cleared the misconceptions on Theosophical Society towards the Hindu Social and Religions institutions. He awakened each member by his tours.

Table No. V-1

Table indicates that the tour of C. Kotaiah in various places in Andhra during the month of February to June 1891.

S.No.	Name of the Branch (Lodge)	Period of stay
1.	Cuddap ah	Feb. 2 - 6
2.	Tad i pa tri*	Feb. 7 - 9
3.	Ananthapur	Feb. 11-15
4.	Gooty	Feb. 17-21
5.	Bellary	March 2-7
6.	Kurnool	March 10-14
7.	Adonii	March 16-20
8.	Hyderabad(Deccan)	March 21-25
9.	Secunderabad	March 26-30
10.	Bolarum	April 2 - 5
11.	Bezwada	April 7- 11
12.	Eluru (Ellore)	April 13-17
13.	Rajahmundry	April 19-23
14.	Coconada (Kakinada)	Apl.27-May 3
15.	Vizaga patnam	May 5 - 9
16.	Vijayanagaram	May 13-17
17.	Masulipatnam	May 20-24
18.	Guntoor	May 27-31
19.	Ongole*	June 2-3
20.	Kondukuru*	June 5-10
21.	Kanigiri	June 12-13
22.	Udaigiri *	June 15-16
23.	Butchireddipalem	June - 17
24.	Nellore	

Source: Supplement to the *Theosophist* Vol.xxi, NO.5, February 1891. Adyar, 1891, p.xxiv.

- Though there are no branches in these places, C.Kotaiah visited them on the way.

The general activities were taken up by these branches for the growth and spread of Theosophy in Andhra in order to maintain a tempo in the activities of Theosophical Movement. They framed rules for every branch, such as:⁸⁸

- a. The names of the office-bearers
- b. The number of meetings held
- c. The percentage of attendance
- d. The nature of work done
- e. How are the work and its movement appreciated and accepted by the people
- f. Whether the branch has got library to it? Whether Theosophical and any kind of journals are subscribed for?
- g. Whether the branch can take to translate, either through its members, sympathizers or any other means, important work from Sanskrit and vernaculars into English.

The object of the calling for this report was to have a correct and accurate knowledge of real work turned out by the Branches. Every branch followed the above rules and worked for Theosophy.

The most important mission of the Theosophical society was to promote the growth of intellectual thought and perfection in cooperation between all sections of humanity. The Theosophical society had mighty task in the spiritual and intellectual regeneration of a nation, loyalty to truth, brotherly cooperation devoted to work for the good to humanity.

When Dr. Annie Besant came to India in 1893, with her deep understanding of the spirit of Indian culture, she threw a good deal of her energy into the revival of the glory of the ancient days of India.

⁸⁸ Supplement to the *Theosophist* May 1891. Adyar, 1891, p.iix.

From the beginning, the Founders were able to restore the Indian people a sense of dignity and brought them a recollection of the lofty spiritual teachings which were their heritage. They strove for India, which blessed as land of religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrism and explore the root of their own tradition and to discover the pearls of the ancient wisdom concealed under the layers of old customs and ignorant aspirations.

Dr. Besant followed in the footsteps of the Founders poured into India her energy and inspiration, bringing about a new consciousness in every field of humanity. Dr. Besant had utilised the inner base of Theosophical society which organised H.S. Olcott and gave her to develop the work of the movement. The vast majority of members were profoundly grateful to her for the lead which she gave them in making Theosophy practical. In the time of Col. Olcott, the interests of members had largely been focussed in the development of religious and philosophical to apply those ideas to social problems. He had also begun a most philanthropic work for the upliftment of untouchables of Madras in his lines of activities. Dr. Besant however at once stroved for making theosophy in practical, in inspiring members to utilise their Theosophical knowledge in action for reform. She argued members to go about into various fields of activities like religious, social, philanthropic to 'Theosophise' them.

Table No.V-2

Table indicating the growth of Theosophical Society under the leadership of Dr. Besant during 1907 to 1933

Year	No. of Active Lodges	No. of Active Members
1907	567	14,863
1908	631	15,671
1909	698	16,898
1910	778	20,356
1911	867	21,464
1912	950	23,140
1913	952	22,744
1914	1,016	24,575
1915	991	25,696
1916	989	26,320
1917	1,074	28,673
1918	896	22,879
1919	1,194	33,427
1920	1,244	36,330
1921	1,349	40,475
1922	1,360	39,773
1923	1,369	40,996
1924	1,520	41,492
1925	1,571	41,645
1926	1,645	43,301
1927	1,679	44,217
1928	1,586	45,098
1929	1,592	43,625
1930	1,490	39,311
1931	1,426	36,115
1932	1,345	33,267
1933	1,279	30,836

Source : General survey made by G.S. Arundale on *Annie Besant's Autobiography*, TPH. Adyar 1939, p.50.

The main elements for the spread of Theosophy with the large amount of lectures, magazines, articles, pamphlets and books on theosophy was an important part of propaganda. 'The translation committees' had been formed with the object of translation of literature, and press had served a wide importance to spread the truths of Theosophy. It published vernacular periodicals, journals like *Sanmarga Bodhini* in Telugu, and

other journals such as *The Theosophic Thinker*, *Theosophy in India*, and *Theosophist* were the main instruments to the spread of Theosophy. The branch had arranged various lectures on weekly meetings on Theosophic lines in lodges at each district. These lectures were responsible to draw better audiences and activate the branches and members. Another important factor to the spread of Theosophy, was to teach works on ancient literature. The Lodges made a clear picture of Theosophy which contained of wall-charts, illustrations and pictures designed for enquiry of Theosophy. By establishing library and reading rooms, each branch became a threshold of knowledge of human past and ancient glory. It became the forerunner of library movement in Andhra. The lodges established in rural areas like Butchireddypalem helped in taking Theosophy into grass-root levels in Andhra. A lodge made a school as the house of spiritual knowledge and sole magnet of brotherhood with amity and friendship.

The Lodge or Branch was the working centre or meeting place of members of Theosophical Society to spread the Theosophical ideals. It was the main instrument to 'Theosophise' under the shade of universal-brotherhood from the grass-root levels. The main cause of success of the movement was the existence of the branches at every town and important villages India. These lodges were considered as the main channels to spread the ideas of Theosophy for the establishment of educational institutions, organising reading rooms, libraries, to promote the Sanskrit literature, ancient faiths, to take active part in welfare measures in society such as establishment of poor-feeding centres, organising the Famine Relief Fund and providing financial assistance to the poor. The Lodges conducted meetings on every week and discussed on religion, science, philosophy and Theosophy.

These lodges worked with various forms of social activities with the idea of service in each town. It became a place of worship of noble aspirations in pure thought and with an atmosphere which connected the past generations. These lodges provided inspiration to invest thoughts of good will and peace.

Since the establishment of Theosophical branches, the Founders gave more emphasis on reviving the ancient faiths. They strived for all the great faiths of the past and stood on a common platform' for humanity. Revival of Hinduism was necessary for the concentration on spiritual life and rebuilding of the nation with the great ideal of past. The main object of the Theosophical Society was to bring all world faiths nearer to each other and to help themselves in mutual understanding. Thus Theosophical Branches created a cosmopolitan culture under the name of universal brotherhood.

The crowning achievement of these branches was to educate the children on Indian morals. In order to achieve that idea, there were various schools established at every branch. The Sanskrit literature religions and moral instruction was the main plank of education, which was to explore the Indian identity. Very early in India the Society took up educational propaganda which had done to bring about education under national control. The highest ideal of education being religious and moral as well as intellectual under national education'. The Theosophical Society which for the first time in India solved the problem to introduce religion into education without any attempt to proselytise or to turn the minds of youth from religion and their faiths.

That every branch rendered the service for the growth of Theosophy and revolutionise the movement under the cultivation of spiritual knowledge, based on Indian morals. It tried to built a harmonious society which got equipped with mutual understanding.

The organisatin of Theosophical lodges have rendered the most important work that is , to disseminate Theosophical ideas and spread the love of humanity. The Founders and sympathizers of the society established Theosophical branches at every place to explore the ancient glory and to awaken the society on Theosophic lines.

The following table indicates the growth and development of the society at gross root-level. The existence of branches at every place shows that Theosophy has very much influenced the people and their lives. The Telugu Federation of Theosophical Society was also a main cause for the spread the theosophy in various places. This federation divided into five zones such as; Andhra, Vishakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur Nellore Zones.

Table No.V-3

ANDHRA ZONE

S.No	Place	Name of the Branch	Dt.of est ablish-ment.	Members
1.	Sri kakulam	Chikakole Lodge	09.04.1901	17
2.	Sompeta	Sri Kodandarama Swamy lodge	20.07.1901	24
3.	Tekkali	Siddhartha Lodge	23.12.1938	25
4.	Palasapuram	Virinchi Narayana	16.07.1945	16
5.	Parvathipuram	The Parvathipuram Lodge	14.12.1945	14
6.	Pondure	Sri Krishna Lodge	06.02.1946	51
7.	Bobbili	The Bobbili Lodge	15-01-1946	51
8.	Barua (Srikakulam District)	Sri Janardhana Lodge	23-09-1946	57
9.	Ichapuram	Venkatanananda Lodge	28-06-1953	10
10.	Kaviti	Sri Krishna Paramatma Lodge	27-6-1953	16
11.	Pragadaputuka	The Pragadaputuka Lodge	12-09-1957	12
12.	Narasannapet	Venkateswarlu Lodge	21-01-1958	24
13.	Karathalapaalem	Seetharama Lodge	15-05-1962	07
14.	Jamuluru	Prasantha Theosophica Society	23-06-1969	06

Table No.V-4

VISHAKHAPATNAM - ZONE

S1. No.	Place	Name of the Branch	Date of Establishment	Members
1.	Vijaynagar am	The Vashista Lodge	18-01-1884	63
2.	Vishakhapatnam (Vizag)	The Vishakhapatnam Lodge (Vizag)	23-09-1887	53
3.	Yelamanchili	The Sarvasiddi Lodge	23-04-1901	05
4.	Chodavaram	The Gowreswara Lodge	24-04-1908	50
5.	Anakapalle	Sri Agastya Lodge	03-01-1921	72
6.	Kallepalle	The Anandeswara (Lodge) Ashramam	23-12-1938	06
7.	Munugupaka	The Munugapaka Theosophical Society	01-10-1942	22
8.	Manudivada	Sri Ramakrishna Lodge	24-10-1960	15
9.	Sarvasiddi	Sri Krishna Lodge	27-06-1953	02
10.	Dondaparthi	The Maithreswara Lodge	24-10-1960	12
11.	Payakarao Pet	Sri Seetharama Gayatri Lodge	01-10-1960	15
12.	Namavaram	Sri Rama Lodge	25-09-1961	15
13.	Guntapalli	The Mourya Lodge	14-11-1962	13
14.	Madugola	The Viveka Lodge	04-09-1962	13
15.	Bhimunipatnam	The Sadguru Theosophical Society	14-07-1968	20
16.	Peda Thadivada	The Jagadamba Lodge	23-09-1946	08

Table No V-5

EAST GODAVARI - ZONE

S. No.	Place	Name of the Branch	Dt.of Est- abliishment	Mem- bers
1.	Kakinada	Sri. Gowthama Lodge (Gents)	10-05-1885	72
2.	Amalapuram	Sri Bhagiradha The- losophical Society Lodge	21-08-1900	41
3.	Peddapuram	Sri Krishna Lodge	01-06-1901	11
4.	Rajahmundry	Sri Gowthami Lodge (Gents)	19-04-1917	36
5.	Rajahmundry	Sri Ramachandra Lodge	30-09-1918	08
6.	Ramachandrapuram	Sri Ramachandra Lodge	30-09-1918	49
7.	Samarlakota	The Samarlakota Lodge	24-08-1927	07
8.	Bikkavole	Sri Kumara Lodge	17-07-1928	11
9.	Gollalamanivada	Sri Kodandarama Theosophical Society	18-12-1934	12
10.	Moolapeta	The Sanjeevashrama Lodge	16-06-1941	04
11.	Tapeswaram	Sri Sachithananda Lodge	30-03-1941	85
12.	Tuni	The Vashista Lodge	06-12-1943	86
13.	Pitapuram	The Varadaraja Lodge	10-02-1945	09
14.	Kakinada	Sri Gowthama Mahila Theosophical Society	10-02-1945	18

Contd.

No.	Place	Name of the Branch	Dt. of Est- ab l i s h m e n t	Mem- bers
15.	Modukuru	Sri Jinaraja Theoso- phical Society Lodge	23-02-1948	13
16.	Mandapeta	Sri Ramamanda Lodge	06-12-1947	05
17.	Vadavalli	Sri Venkateswara Lodge	17-04-1952	05
18.	Davaleswaram	The Godavari Lodge	11-04-1953	18
19.	Valagathodu	The Pattabhirama Theosophical Society	20-12-1955	11
20.	Kottapeta	The Sevashrama Lodge	10-09-1955	06
21.	Gollapalem	Sri Venugopala Lodge	14.11.1961	09
22.	Ryally	Sri Jaganmohini Keshavswamy Theoso- phical Society	25-09-1961	14
23.	Virana	Sri Ramalingeswara Lodge	03.07.1962	16
24.	Chedalada	Sri Kodandarama Lodge	31-10-1962	11
25.	Tirupathi Danavayipet (Rajahmundry)	The Sadananda Lodge	20-09-1963	23
26.	Mukkamala	The Kowshiki Mandali Rushi Lodge	03-08-1964	11
27.	Tuni	Sri Devi Annaura Theosophical Society	03-03-1965	09
28.	Arthamuru	The Agasthya Theosophi- cal Society	01-02-1968	07
29.	Alamuru	Theosophical Society	15-11-1968	03
30.	Athreyapuram	Athrimaharushi Ashramam Theosophical Society	11-04-1969	07

Table No.V-7

GUNTUR & NELLORE ZONE

S.	Place	Name of the Lodge	Dt . of Estt .	Mem- bers
1.	Gunturu	Sri Krishna Lodge	17-05-1882	07
2.	Nellore	Balvatsky Lodge	07-05-1882	35
3.	Kavli	No.234 Theosophical Society Lodge	02-12-1902	03
4.	Gundimedakala	Bharadwaja Ashrama Lodge	11-09-1940	03
5.	Kodavaluru	Kowndinya Ashrama Lodge	05-03-1941	04
6.	Buchire- ddipalem	105, Theosophical Society Lodge.	25-10-1945	05
7.	Nalgonda	Narashimaha Lodge	12-08-1950	15
8.	Bhiravar am (Nellore Dt.	No.975, Theosophical Society	18-07-1955	03
9.	Bitragunta	Bharadwashrama Theosophical Society	01-10-1955	03
10.	Pamaru	The Pamaru Lodge	25-09-1961	21
11.	Tenali	Kowndinya Lodge	19-10-1967	21
12.	Vetapalem	The Vetapalem Lodge	20-06-1969	03
13.	Chirala	The Chirala Theosophical Society.	21.06-1969	03

Source: *Divyagnana Samaja Darshini* (Telugu Federation), Guntur 1970, pp. 1-7.

The spread of Theosophy in Madras Presidency during the late 19th and early 20th centuries forms an important chapter in the history of contemporary Andhra Society. The zeal with which Col. H.S. Olcott toured the entire Madras Presidency taking the message of Theosophy strengthened the very society. In fact, his intense campaign in promoting the ideals of Theosophy truly provided the much required scope for Dr. Annie Besant to further consolidate the movement. Her association with public agitations in England came very handy in organising Theosophical Movement in India. Her constant emphasis on Hindu morals and her call to revive all enlightened qualities of ancient Indian civilization endeared her to the newly emerging educated middle class. Precisely these traditional

and moderate sections of the educated formed the main social basis of Theosophical Movement.

Theosophical movement was very constructive in public activities. Various Theosophical Lodges established during this period in Andhra largely concentrated on imparting education and social service activities like famine-relief. Through their selfless service Theosophical lodges and their members conveyed a message that they were truly engaged in social reconstruction work. It was this sense of social responsibility among the members of Theosophical lodges in Madras Presidency which kept alive the torch of Theosophy till the death of Annie Besant in 1933. Spread of enlightenment in society through illuminating discourses on religion, a sense of social responsibility and readings to serve a genuine public cause form a part of such a legacy of Theosophical lodges in Andhra.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSIONS

The life and career of Dr. Annie Besant has been an enigma by itself. Born and brought up in England, Dr. Besant adopted India as her homeland and incessantly strived for rousing Indian nationalism at a time when British colonial rule was averse to the cause of Indian Independence. She launched several movements like Home Rule in support of the natives. As a Theosophist, she authored and spread the concept of National Education. She served as the President of Indian National Congress and was in the eye of several tumultuous political and social movements. She incurred the wrath of few powerful sections for opposing Gandhi under whose leadership the Indian national movement then was carried. Dr. Besant herself a prolific writer, was a subject for many books and treatises. However, she and her work continue to evoke intense feelings among the contemporary commentators.

Annie Besant, an Irish by birth, became a Theosophist and since she visited India for the time, she adopted herself to India which she considered as her motherland. She had won public recognition as a great leader in several reform movements in the west by her outstanding oratorical gifts. Her numerous writings reflect her comprehensive understanding of religious, social, philosophic and political subjects. Dr. Annie Besant came to be acquainted with the works of Charles Bradlaugh. She joined the 'Free Thought Society' and worked as speaker and lectured on behalf of her colleagues like Sidney Webb, George Bernard

Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Bland and Graham Walls. She along with others spread her ideas through lectures on social justice and political reform.

Mrs. Besant led an agitation for an 'Eight hours day' for factory workers and she strived for the children of dock-workers. She protested against unfair wages and illegal deductions from wages of match workers. She formed a Match Maker Union for better conditions of the workers.

Annie Besant, ever since she became a Theosophist, remained as Mme. Blavatsky's prime disciple. She arrived in India to work for Theosophy. Col. Olcott was the founder president of the society till he died. He was succeeded in his office by Dr. Annie Besant. As the President of the Society, she rendered great services in various fields like political, social, religious and educational. She also worked for the enlightenment of the Indian people through the Theosophical Society. Col. Olcott aspired for the revival of Indian national feeling by his relentless work for the spread of Theosophy. During his extensive tours in India, great enthusiasm was aroused by his lectures. Numerous branches of the Society were brought into existence in various parts of the country. Many scholars and libraries were organised by Theosophical Branches in Madras Presidency by the end of 19th century and early 20th century.

Col. Olcott's intensive campaign in promoting the ideas of Theosophy truly provided the much required scope for Annie Besant to further consolidate the movement. He made a ground work for the spread of Theosophy in India which Annie Besant could strengthen and consolidate during her active period of life. When Dr. Besant came to India, with

her deep understanding of the spirit of Indian culture threw a good deal of her energy into revival of the glory of the ancient days of India. She utilised her energy and inspiration bringing about a new consciousness in every field of humanity. She worked for making Theosophy as a way of life.

Dr. Annie Besant's underscoring of India's past glory and civilisation was a part of her strategy. She devoted herself to social reform from her early career. Dr. Besant strongly felt that the recognition of Indian womanhood depended on India's awakening. She had delivered her first lecture based on the theme that emancipation of women solely depended on the freedom of the people. She pleaded that liberty, equality and fraternity were the need of the day. In order to achieve her aim, she established girls school to bring women out of the shell of 'Pardah'. She encouraged active participation of women in all social, political and educational fields. She had been the champion and advocate of Indian political rights, religious and cultural values besides being that champion of women's position and their education. She revolted against taboos, meaningless customs and conventions. She believed that women could be custodians of the civilization and culture for Indian.

Dr. Besant gave much importance for girls' education. She suggested that the Indian girl should have acquaintance with Indian literature, history and other subjects. She revolted against child marriages. She strongly opined that the future of India as a nation depended on the abolition of Child marriages. In order to achieve her object, she carried on social reform activities and organised various societies to propagate

against child marriage and caste system; but favouring foreign travel, promotion of education for girls and depressed classes.

One of her major achievements was to establish the educational trust under Theosophical Society and another society for national education, to promote the national, free and secular education in India.

Dr. Besant was an educationalist with high aims and ideals. She emphasised on the need for India to develop a national spirit to take its place among the nations of the world and to develop educational methods founded on Indian ideals. She became the founder of National Education under the name of the Society for promotion of National Education. She brought a new spirit in the country and worked tirelessly for the promotion of education.

When Mrs. Besant came to India for the first time she found that those who had modern education on western lines were beginning to be materialistic and looked down on their ancient faith with indifference. They were carried away by the glamour of western civilisation and apologetic about their own national culture. Basically her plan of education had two distinct aspects: One was the religious foundation and the other was patriotism. She recognised that the awakening of India's national life should be based on religion and spirituality. Theosophy emphasised on four important principles of education, viz., religious, mental, moral and physical development. According to Dr. Annie Besant, absence of any one of these elements results in an imperfect and unscientific system of education.

Till almost the end of her career Besant directed and inspired the system of Theosophical education. She shaped and moulded its policy and energised true education for humanity. As the president of Indian National Congress at Calcutta Session, she got opportunity of planning out a system of National education in India. Her idea of national education had three features. She wanted that the University should breath Indian spirit, when the western system was the order of the day, and that scientific education should be taught to Indian youth. The second feature was that the religious education should farm an integral part of curriculum. The third feature was that education should train students for individual success and for the country.

Dr. Besant strongly believed that the chief educational want of India was colleges run on national lines and under national control. The children should grow up through their school and college life in an atmosphere of pure and passionate patriotism, full of pride in their country and full of aspiration for her service. She had clearly stated that, the work is to train citizens for a free India and not clerks for the British bureaucracy.

The four-fold system of education for boys and girls as envisaged by Dr. Annie Besant reveals a significant aspects of the system of education under Theosophy. The division of education into religious, emotional (moral and mental) physical and environmental subjects provided wholistic approach to the development of the student's personality. The weightage given to religious teaching is aimed at imparting spiritual qualities to

the learners. The equal encouragement has been given to the study of noble faiths of each religion depending on the religion of the students. It is doubtless to say that such a step was initiated to promote religious harmony in a righteous direction right from the studenthood.

Under the scheme of moral and mental development, study of languages, science, mathematics, psychology and training in moral and aesthetic values have been encouraged. Theosophical education made an attempt to train students with emphasis on 'totality' of human development. Another important ingredient of Theosophical education was instruction in the physiology of sex to the students under instruction as a part of physical education. It was to inculcate a humanistic approach and respect for each gender, and also designed to promote healthy relations between opposite sexes and to drive away notions of gender discrimination. This aspect assumes gender importance in the light of the plight of female members of Indian society.

The inclusion of environment aspects of school curriculum was to create a rightful awareness of environment in the process of learning which was highly innovative in the system of Theosophical education. The concept of four-fold education under Theosophy provided the much required scope for the development of physical, mental and emotional character of students. Theosophy's main objective and cherished ideal was to train students as future citizens even when they are under instruction. This wholistic approach to education of children was a major contribution under Theosophical education would. For Theosophy, education was not a mere academic exercise. Rather, it was considered as a system which would

beget future citizens empowered with knowledge and upright personality to serve the society with a touch a humanity.

The crowning achievement of Dr. Besant's contribution in educational field was the establishment of the Central Hindu College in Beneras, which was affiliated to Allahabad University. The aim of the college was to teach the deep truths of Hindu religion while seeking to unite the best of Indian culture, with the best of western principles of education.

With her characteristic vigour and determination and as an idealistic **educationalist**, Dr. Besant founded the Theosophical Educational Trust (TET). A number of Schools were started by the Theosophical Educational Trust at places like Madras, Kumbakonam, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Madanapalle etc. The Theosophical Educational Trust was to train students in a way that would make them complete human beings and responsible citizens. The Theosophical Society realised the importance of education for down trodden sections of the society. This is proved by the fact that several schools were opened for **panchamas** at Madras, Madanapalle and Nellore. Theosophy Society became the forerunner of Gandhi who in the post-1920 period laid great emphasis on Harijana upliftment.

A large number of Theosophical institutions like the National Women's College Beneras, the National College in Hyderabad (Sindh) now in Pakistan, Wood National College in Madanapalle, the college of Agricultural and commerce and also the training college at Madras were affiliated to the new National University.

The Theosophical education was devoted to the over all development of students based on various subjects and religious principles as enshrined in world religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Theosophical education is a synthesis of western form and Indian thought. While it adopted the western mode of English education, it deviated from the British education in so far as it included subjects like science, environment, physical training and moral science based on the enlightened principles of Indian faith.

The system of education as envisaged by Theosophy is a healthy combination of religious morals and academic excellence. It is a unique venture in the field of learning which tried to blend the ideals of Theosophy and Indian Culture. The system endeavored to channelize human life through a new mode of learning. Whatever may be the short comings, it was a bold attempt to achieve a synthesis of the best elements of indigenous tradition and principles of contemporary and modern education. The need for such a synthesis is greater now than it was during the active life of Dr. Annie Besant.

Mrs. Besant was an able organiser, a gifted journalist and a great orator of her generation who devoted herself to social reform from the very childhood. She worked strenuously in India with her powerful pen and golden voice that contributed for the awakening of new India. The gift of lucid speech has placed Mrs. Besant in the front rank of women orators in the world. She had great passion for human freedom and sympathy for the low and down trodden. She was guided and directed by her idealistic sense

of responsibility for the greater interests of the nation and the world in the promotion of peace and order.

Dr. Besant travelled on behalf of Theosophical Society. By her endless tours throughout the length and breadth of the country, speaking from hundreds of platforms inspired thousands of men and women. By her eloquent speeches, she trained the youth for citizenship, rich in religion, the perfect sense of patriotism, practical efficiency for honourable livelihood and useful service. She strongly supported that Theosophy was the underlying truth of every religion. She travelled round the country with her object that Theosophy was identical with the teachings of ancient scriptures and spreading that knowledge throughout the world. She awakened the youth by her silver tongue and oratory skill. Her speeches focussed on the greatness of the culture and religion in India.

As an organiser Mrs. Besant established various organisations to provide a systematic training to Indian youth to make them patriotic citizens. She relentlessly worked for secular education, political awareness in society and problems related to women's upliftment. In order to achieve her aim, Mrs. Besant established various organisations throughout the country. Ever since she became the president of Theosophical Society, Mrs. Besant rendered great service for the cause of Theosophy. She founded "The Theosophic Order of Service" and "Order of Sons and Daughters of India". To promote Theosophical education, she encouraged the establishment of Young Men's Association and she was the first president of Women's Indian Association. Apart from these, she

established a debating society known as 'Madras Parliament' and Mock Parliament which taught the parliamentary norms aiming at Home Rule. Dr. Besant founded the 'Indian Scout Movement' to bring every citizen to do his duty to the country and to be kind towards his fellow citizens.

Dr. Besant herself was well known as an author. The amount of literary work turned out from her pen was enormous. She published several articles, pamphlets magazines and books. She wrote incessantly on religion, philosophy, service politics etc. She collaborated in writing a number of books, pamphlets and translated books and edited in some periodicals during her life time. *The Commonweal* and *New India* were the main life-line of propaganda of her views on politics, education and Social reform. By her outstanding literary ability, the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred on her by the Central Hindu University, Benaras.

Dr. Besant was a multifaced personality. She worked relentlessly in all areas of human activity. As a great orator, she conscientiously used her oratorical powers for the welfare of the people. The range of her intellect and organisational capacity was of high order devoted to the service and welfare of the Indians.

From the beginning of her career, Mrs. Annie Besant had been a Home-Ruler whether in the case of Ireland or South Africa or India. She had been a passionate opponent of all injustice to the weaker sections and never hesitated to express her opposition to the Government of the day. A strong factor of influence for her entry into the political arena was her

Irish background. Annie Besant was brought up in an Irish atmosphere which was dominated by strong sentiments of liberty, freedom of speech and fundamental human rights. She embodied such liberal traditions during her formative years that she had been endeavoured in her ability to be guided in politics. Her inexhaustible energy and tireless industry, her alertness and courageous optimism paved the way for carrying constructive methods in Indian politics.

Mrs. Annie Besant's participation in Indian politics synchronized with the commencement of the World War-I. She contributed for two great conceptions with all progressive movements in the country. They were: firstly, Home Rule for India as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and Secondly, the responsible Government as the ultimate goal.

Mrs. Besant's aim was to see India a united nation attaining freedom functioning on a level of equality with all other nations. She brought about change in the outlook in India's fight for self-rule. Mrs. Besant not only roused public opinion to support the self-rule movement, but also showed Indian journalistic technique of writing through effective articles through the *Commonweal* and *New India*. Her writings became a main streamline of propaganda for India's freedom. By a series of stirring articles she created a new atmosphere and stressed the thinking of nationalists.

Mr. Besant entered the Indian political arena and set the platform for agitational activities through the Madras session of Indian National organisation. Since joining the Congress, she began to activate the

Congress. Her first and foremost aim was to unify the moderates and extremists on common platform of Congress. She proposed an amendment of the constitution for the re-entry of the extremist leaders into the Congress tent. But her proposal failed on the eve of the Madras session of Indian National Congress. It has resulted in the formation of a new organisation as well as All India Home Rule League for the self government. Hence, it became a common platform for both moderates and extremist leaders to attain freedom for India. She formed Home Rule League to carry on to educate and fight for self-government for India.

The main object of Home Rule Movement was to achieve self-government for India through the constitutional methods. By the efforts of Annie Besant, the Bombay session had witnessed unification of Congress. The Bombay session was also significant as it marked the beginning of great fraternization between Hindus and Muslims. Mrs. Besant took prominent role to unify the two communities, of Hindus and Muslims.

Mrs. Besant and Tilak reviewed political unity in the entire country through the Home Rule agitation. The All India Home Rule League commenced its work with Besant as its president and C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer as its General Secretary. The strong base of the league was South where the Theosophical Society members spread the Home Rule message. Mrs. Besant took active part on student affairs through the organisation of Boy Scouts, Mock-Parliaments, libraries and reading rooms. These were introduced for creating the political consciousness among the youth. The establishment of the 'Madras **Parliament**', debating society was to teach the youth the parliamentary forms and methods.

Mrs. Besant built up for the Home Rule League an emotional mass support. The Indian National Congress was an auxiliary of the Home Rule League because of her inspiring leadership. The nationalist congressmen desired that Mrs. Besant should preside over the 31st session of Indian National Congress, held at Lucknow. But she was to be the choice for the next session to be held at Calcutta. Mrs. Besant and Tilak made the Lucknow session a grand success. It was in a way a conference of moderates, extremists and Home Rulers. Mrs. Besant helped to formulate the congress leagues scheme passed by the Lucknow session. Mrs. Besant was externed by the Government of Bombay, so that she could not enter Bombay presidency. The Central Provinces also externed her. The Government of Madras interned her. But there was such a powerful reaction in India following on her internment that within three months, British policy had to be changed. As soon as she was released, the popular wave of enthusiasm was roused. She was elected to preside over the 32 session of the Indian National Congress.

But Mrs. Besant was almost side lined in political scene in India after Calcutta session because of her insistence on the need to obey the law and to shun non-cooperation. Besant's methods to attain freedom for India was by way of intense and well organised constitutional agitation. She felt that non-cooperation was to bring a deadlock in the functioning of government and civil disobedience would lead to disturbance. She Strongly advocated the British connection and India's place as an equal member in the British Parliament.

Members of various Theosophical lodges in the Madras Presidency were necessarily drawn from educated middle classes of the upper stratum of Hindu caste hierarchy. This was not strange in the contemporary society as most of the movements, both social and religious, originating in mid-19th century had to primarily depended on these sections. The new political regime under the colonial power created an atmosphere where the early Indian tradition of learning lost its grip giving way to new English education. Given the fact that the operational aspects of new colonial economy and new national market threw open jobs only for English-knowing people, most members from traditional upper castes in the Hindu society took to new education.

The consequent contact with western knowledge provided enough scope for the new educated sections to vitality view both the cultural traditions, Indian and Western. It was this middle class which shouldered the responsibility of effecting change in contemporary society. It is against this background that the social base of any mid-19th century social movements may be viewed. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the association of large number of educated middle classes with the contemporary movements.

The Theosophical Society attracted people from the middle class also. Majority of the members belonged to upper caste, who by then acquired proficiency in english language surpassing other castes. They were followed by learned sections from the other non-Brahmin castes like Vaisyas. Given the negligible percentage of literacy among other lower castes, there is no evidence to show that members from these castes were

enrolled in large numbers into Theosophical lodges. As a result, the social base of Theosophy in Madras Presidency remained confined to a few elite sections in the society. This did not hamper the activities of various Theosophical lodges. They were multi-dimensional which included social service of the members apart from other avocations like propagation of lofty principles in traditional Hindu scriptures. That the Theosophical movement initiated attempts at imparting modern English to down-trodden people in the city of Madras attests this fact.

The narrow social base of the movement proved to be a major hurdle for the organisers to take it to the grassroots level. Till a time when Theosophy was given a political dimension by Annie Besant, the base of the movement remained confined to a few sections. Though this does not amount to say that it was more in traditional mould of Indian civilization and moderate in its views, its emphasis on abstract ethical values and its failure in understanding faced by common people limited its operations to certain sections of the contemporary society.

Dr. Annie Besant is one of the great personalities of the world who has rendered public service to humanity. She was a marvelous personage in the combination of the different qualities of enthusiasm, eloquence, power of organisation, courage, energy, determination, optimism and faith. She was Irish by birth, English by marriage and Indian by adoption. She rendered her great services to social, educational, religious, political and humanitarian spheres of work for Indian awakening. She devoted herself to social reform from her very childhood. Her work in connection with Fabian Society, preaching the equal status for women. She

strenuously toiled for the Match Factory-working girls. She faced great odds in the publication of knowlton pamphlet wherein she came out triumphantly in all the courts of justice. She was born as a Christian, turned an athiest, freethinker, a Fabian materialist, socialist and became a Theosophist.

Since, she joined the Theosophical Society, her services were to all the countries of the world. She has thrown light on various religions of the world under the banner of universal brotherhood, love and truth. She strove for liberty of thought. She was undaunted fighter for human liberty and worked to noble causes for oppressed from the social and economic slavery and was an upholder of the cause of the weak and down trodden.

Dr. Besant fought for Indian liberty. She worked with unsurpassed devotion and tireless energy in all spheres towards the shaping of new India. She strove towards the building up for new civilization. She created Indian spirit and tried to eliminate the barriers in society. Her marvelous grasp of human nature made her to make a person as useful citizen and honoured member of his race. Her intense love of freedom, and her passionate sacrifice for the sake of truth were exemplary. She became a champion of freedom for India.

Annie Besant was one of the great religious reformers who revived Hinduism from its roots. Before she landed in India, Dr. Annie Besant was to give lucid speech on ancient Hindu religion along with her Theosophical Doctrines at the world parliament of Religions in Chicago. She was one

of the first to take the message of Hindu philosophy of yoga, the Sankhya and the transmigration of soul. She was the first western philosopher who spread Indian mythological tenets to the other lands.

Annie Besant was a prolific writer and journalist. She wrote profusely in *National Reformer*. She worked in *The Link* that was started with humanitarian ideas by William Stead and others. In India she ran the Theosophical bulletins like *The Theosophist*, *Adyar Bulletin*, etc. with great success. After she plunged into politics, she wrote a series of stirring articles in *New India* and *The Commonweal*.

Dr. Annie Besant was a mighty spirit. She went round the world frequently and inspired millions of people through lucid speeches. By her many-sided activities and relentless work, Annie Besant had almost become a legend in her own time. She influenced a generation of great persons all over who included great thinkers and scholars, by her magnificent acumen. Motilal Nehru became a Theosophist as a result of Annie Besant's influence over him. Later he became an active Home Leaguer in Allahabad. Many statesmen and great leaders like Mohd. Ali, Jinnah, Srinivasa Iyer, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer etc., were influenced by her. Most of them became active participants in Home Rule League later.

For most Indians, Dr. Besant was known as 'Mother'. She had many affectionate titles like *Bari Mem Sahib* *The big European Lady*. In south, people called and adored her as '*Vasanthamma*' and '*Anna Bai*'.

Together with her national educational social and cultural work and woman suffrage movement, Annie Besant added the Home Rule Movement into her national programme, after being inspired by the Irish Home Rule movement. She made efforts to unite different wings in Indian politics. She brought Gokhale and Tilak together on to a single political platform. She caused the Lucknow pact which brought the Hindu Muslim leaders together and tried to bring the Home Rule League and Congress together. She was the first lady to preside over the Indian National Congress. She was the first to plead for Dominion Status and she had taken her own 'Commonwealth of Indian Bill' even up to the House of Commons in London.

Dr. Besant was not a mere individual. She was a multi-dimensional character. She was an incessant crusader for human dignity, freedom and brotherhood. History has had very few parallels like Dr. Annie Besant who with her Universalism, religious toleration and respect for human rights never hesitated to revolt against racial discrimination, oppression and exploitation. At a time when aping of the west was the order of the day in India, Dr. Besant taught people how to stand on their own with courage and conviction against all odds. It is no exaggeration to say that the self confidence she inculcated among the Indians stood in good stead in their fight against the British during their struggle for freedom.

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APPENDICES

Appendix No. 1

The table showing the number of delegates who represented from 1885

Sl. No.	Name of the President	Place	Date	No. of Delegates.
1.	Woomes Chunder Benerjee (1844- 1906)	Bombay	Dec.28-30, 1885	72
2.	Dadabhai Nauraji (1825- 1917)	Calcutta	Dec,27-30, 1886	634
3.	Badruddin Tyabji (1844- 1906)	Madras	Dec,27-30, 1887	607
4.	George Yule (1829-1892)	Allahabad	Dec,26-29, 1888	1,284
5.	William Wedduburn (1836- 1918)	Bombay	Dec,26-29, 1889	1,889
6.	Pheroze Shah Mehta (1845- 1915)	Calcutta	Dec,26-30, 1890	677
7.	P.Ananda Charulu (1843- 1908)	Nagapur	Dec,28-30, 1891	812
8.	W.C. Bennerjee (1844- 1906)	Allahabad	Dec,28-30, 1892	625
9.	Dadabhai Nauroji (1825-1917)	Lahore	Dec,27-30, 1893	867
10.	Alfred Webb ()	Madras	Dec,26-29, 1894	1, 163
11.	Surendra Nath Bennerjee (1848- 1925)	Poona	Dec,27-28, 1895	1,584
12.	Rahimatulla Mohd.Sayani (1847- 1902)	Calcutta	Dec,28-31, 1896	784
13.	C. Sankar Nair (1857- 1906)	Amroati	Dec,27-29, 1897	692
14.	Ananda Mohan Bose (1847- 1906)	Madras	Dec,29-31, 1898	614
15.	Ramesh Chunder Dutt (1848- 1909)	Lucknow	Dec,27-30, 1899	739
16.	N.G. Chandravarkar (1855- 1923)	Lahore	Dec,27-30, 1900	567
17.	Dinshaw Edulji Wacha (1844- 1936)	Calcutta	Dec,26-28, 1901	896
18.	S.N. Bennerjee (1849- 1909)	Ahmedabad	Dec,23-26, 1902	471
19.	Lal Mohan Ghose (1849- 1909)	Madras	Dec,28-30, 1903	538
20.	Sir Henry Cotton (1845- 1909)	Bombay	Dec,26-28, 1904	1,010
21.	Gopala Krishna Gokhale (1866- 1915)	Beneras	Dec,27-30, 1905	757
22.	Dadabhai Nauraji (1825- 1915)	Calcutta	Dec,26-29, 1906	1,663

contd.

Sl. No.	Name of the President	Place	Date	No. of Delegates
23.	Dr. Rash Behar i Gosh (1945-1921)	Surat (Part-I)	Dec, 26-28, 1907	1,663
23.	-do-	Madras (Part-II)	Dec, 28-30, 1908	562
24.	Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946)	Lahore	Dec, 27-29, 1909	243
25.	Sir William Wedderburn (1836-1918)	Allahabad	Dec, 26-29, 1910	636
26.	Bishan Narayan Dar (1864-1916)	Lucknow	Dec, 26-28, 1911	446
27.	R. N. Mudhokar (1857-1921)	Bankipore	Dec, 26-28, 1912	207
28.	Nawa Syed Md. Bahadur (- 1919)	Karachi	Dec, 26-28, 1913	349
29.	Bhupendre Nath Basu (1859-1924)	Madras	Dec, 28-30, 1914	866
30.	Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (1863-1927)	Bombay	Dec, 27-29, 1915	2,259
31.	Ambica Charan Mazundar (1851-1922)	Lucknow	Dec, 26-30, 1916	2,350
32.	Dr. Annie Bewsant (1847-1933)	Calcutta	Dec, 26-29, 1917	4,967

See for details:

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Appendix No. 2

Pictures given by Dr. Annie Besant with the details of places and
(projects)

Late-year	P l a c e	S u b j e c t
1.10.1893	Town Hall , Colombo	The World's Great Needs.
2.11.1893	Palm Cottah (Taticorin)	Life after Death.
3.11. 1893	Palm Cottah (Taticorin)	Materialism
4. 11.1893	Madura	Karma, The Evidence in favour of the Existance, Mahatmas.
5.11. 1893	Trichonapoly	India , Past and Present.
6.11.1893	Town Hall - Tanjore	Indian Mission
6.11.1893	Tanjore	Theosophy and Science, Influence of Materialism.
7.11.1893	Kumbakonam	Theosophy and Modern Progress.
7.11.1893	Kumbakonam	Adepts as facts and Ideals
8.11. 1893	Kumbakonam	Materialism , Hinduism and Theosophy.
12. 1893	Coimbatore (Town Hall)	Theosophy and its Techings.
12. 1893	Coimbatore (Town Hall)	Materialism.
12. 1893	Bengalore	Theosophy and Ethics, Theosophy and Science.
12. 1893	Bellary	Theosophy and Materialism.
12. 1893	Bellary	Death and Life after Death.
12. 1893	Bellary	India and Modern Progress.
1.12. 1893	Hyderabad (Deccan)	Theosophy Vs. Modern Science.
1.12. 1893	Hyderabad (Deccan)	Death and Life after Death.
3.12. 1893	Hyderabad (Deccan)	Is a Man a Soul.
6. 12. 1893	Rajahmundry	Theosophy and Science.
6.12.1893	Rajahmundry (Gautham Lodge)	Inadequancy of Materialism.
16.12. 1893	-do-	Reincarnation in its bearing on social problems.
18.12. 1893	Bezawada	Pilgrims of the Soul.
21.12.1893	Madras	The Dangers of Materialism.
27.12.1893	Adyar (Head Quarters)	Building of the Cosmos.

contd.

late-year	Place	Subject
j. 12.1893	Madras (Town Hall)	Fire as one of the elements in the building of the Cosmos.
p. 12.1893	Madras (Town Hall)	Karma.
1.01.1894	Madras (Esplanade)	India.
3.01.1894	Madras (Victoria Hall)	The suffering of materialism.
3.01.1894	Calcutta	India's place among the nations .
4.01.1894	Calcutta	Theosophy and Hinduism.
4.01.1894	Berhampur	India, past , present and future.
5.01.1894	Berhampur	Reincarnation and Karma.
9.01.1894	Berhampur	Theosophy and Hinduism.
1.01.1894	Bakimpore	The evidence of Theosophy.
2.01.1894	Bakimpore	Theosophy and Hinduism .
.03.1894	Bereilly	From Atheism to Hinduism, Man and his destiny.
5.03.1894	Bombay	The insufficiency of materialism.
7.03.1895	London (St. James Hall)	The Mahatmas as facts and ideals.
7.03.1895	-do-	Karma.
8.03.1896	Calcutta (Town Hall)	Vivisectionism .
5.06.1896	New York	Theosophy its past, its present and its future.
4.01.1897	Scandinavia	Theosophy and Christinity.
7-28 f Dec. 1897	Adyar, (Head Quarters) Convention Lectures.	The Evaluation and life and form.
ay, 1899	England	Ancient Modern Science, Theosophy and Future of India, The Mahabharata , The Ancient Wisdom, The Christ , The Place of the emotions in human evolution .
ug. 1899.	Amestradam , Brussels	Dreams eastern and western science .
ec. 1899	Adyar, (Head Quarters)	Avat aras .

contd.

Date-year	Place	Subject
April 1900	England	The Emotions their peace , Evolution Culture and Use; Thoughts power it control and culture .
Sept. 1900	Benaras	Ancient Ideals on Modern Life.
Dec. 1901	C.H.C. Benaras	Islam, Jainism, Sikhism.
July 1902	England	Theosophy and Imperialism.
Dec. 1902	Benaras	Conventional lectures on The Laws of the higher life.
Dec. 1903	Adyar	Conventional lectures on the value of Theosophy for the rising of India.
June 1904	Queen Hall, England.	The new Psychology .
July 1904	England	Is Theosophy anti Christian? The new Psychology, The message of Theosophy to mankind.
Dec. 1904	Adyar	Conventional lectures on Theosophy in relation to human life .
May 1905	Bombay	The unification of India .
June 1905	(European Theosophical Foundation Congress) London .	The work of Theosophy in the world .
Dec. 1905	Adyar	Conventional lectures on The Bhagavadgita .
Dec. 1906	Adyar	Conventional lectures on The wisdom of the Upanishads.
Dec. 1907	Benaras	Conventional lectures on An introduction to yoga.
Dec. 1908	Adyar	Conventional lectures on The opening cycle .
Aug. 1909	Chicago, New York.	The coming Christ, The coming race , Life here and hereafter.
Sept. 1909	Chicago , New York.	The signs of an opening age.
Nov. 1909	London.	The work of Theosophical Society, The returns of the Christ, The New Era, The coming race.

contd.

late-year	Place	Subject
c. 1909	Beneras	Conventional lectures on Mysticism and Occultism , The work of Theosophical Society.
ec. 1910	Adyar	Conventional lectures on The opening of a new cycle.
an. 1911	Adyar(Banyan tree)	White lodge and its messages.
ay 1911	London	The Emergence of world religion and a world teacher.
une 1911	London (Queen Hall)	World Religion, World Teacher.
uly 1911	Paris	The message of Giordano Bromo to the Modern World.
ec. 1911	Beneras	Conventional lectures on The Ideas of Theosophy.
eb. 1912	England	Why we believe in the coming of World Teacher.
larch 1912	England (Queen Hall)	The path of imitation and the perfection of man.
ec. 1912	Adyar	Conventional lectures on Theosophy and Theosophical Society.
pril 1913	Madras(Victoria Hall)	The higher self and the spiritual life .
lay 1913	England (Queen Hall)	The restoration of the mysteries.
uly 1913	Stockholm	The condition of Intellectual and spiritual growth, Saviour of the world, The Christ in history, The Christ in man.
an. 1914	Madras	Theosophy and Christinity, Theosophy and Morality, Occultism in the great religions.
April 1914	Bangalore	Theosophy and Religion, Theosophy and Science .
April 1914	Tanjore	Theosophy and caste.
May 1914	Paris	Some differences entered in Occult research, Individualism and the origin of karma.

contd.

Date-year	Place	Subject
Kay-June 1914	Paris (Queen Hall)	The meaning and method of mysticism , The God idea, the man idea , the Christ idea and interpretations .
Oct. 1914	Calcutta	Why India should have Home Rule.
Dec. 1915	Gwalior	The value of Theosophy in India.
Dec. 1915	Adyar	Conventional lectures on life's deeper problems , Theosophy and God, Theosophy and man, Theosophy and right and wrong , Theosophy and brotherhood.
Dec. 1916	Locknow (I.N.C.)	Conventional lectures on The duties of Theosophist, To religion to society, To his Nation and Humanity work for the community .
April 1917	Adyar (Theosophical Convention)	Work for community.
March 1918	Adyar (South Indian Convention)	Conventional lectures on Theosophy and National life.
Sept. 1918	Bombay	Life after death.
Aug.-Sept. 1919	London	Why India wants Home Rule.
Oct. 1919	London (Queen's Hall)	The war and the future.
Nov. 1919	Beneras	The duty of Theosophical Society.
Oct. 1920	Beneras	The inner government of the world.
Dec. 1920	Adyar (International Convention)	Conventional lectures on The great plan, Manus and Bodhisattavas .
June 1921	London (Queen's Hall)	Britain's place in the great plan .

contd.

Date-year	Place	Subject
July 1921	Paris	The Theosophical ideal.
Dec. 1921	Beneras (International Convention)	Conventional lectures on Theosophy and world problems.
Dec. 1922	Adyar (International Convention)	Conventional lectures on Your world and ours.
Dec. 1923	Beneras	Religion and problems.
June 1924	England (Queen's Hall)	Civilizations and dead locks.
Dec. 1924	Bombay (International Theosophical Convention)	The real and unreal in a nation's life.
Sept.-Oct. 1925	England (Queen's Hall)	The world problems of today.
Feb. 1926	Hyderabad (Sindh)	A world's religion.
June 1926	London (Queen's Hall)	The coming of a world teacher as seen by ancient and modern psychology, The new civilization.
Aug. 1927	Hamburg	The new race and Germany's place in the world.
Aug. 1927	Copenhagen	The world teacher and new civilization , The future of the Europe - peace or war.
Nov. 1927	Adyar	The new civilization , The work of Manu.
July 1928	Sheffield, Manchester.	The empire of force or federation
June 1929	London (Queen's Hall)	Life after death.
May 1930	Beneras (International Convention)	The future of the Theosophical Society.
Oct. 1932	Adyar (Head quarters)	The future of the Theosophical Society , The future of young generation.

-Appendix No. 3

Details of the **books, pamphlets** and articles written **by** Dr. Annie Besant.

YEAR	RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY
1882	Physiology of Home.
1892	The Seven Principles of Man.
1894	The Building of the Kasmos .
1887	Why I do not believe in Cod.
1895	The means of India's Regeneration .
1894	The building of Cosmos (Kasmos).
1895	In the outer court, Karma. The Masters facts and ideals. The self and its sheaths.
1896	Man and His Bodres , the path of Discipleship.
1987	Four Great Religions . The three paths
1898	Esoteric Christianity .
1897	Individuality .
1899	Dharma, Evolution of Life and Fourm .
1901	Death and Fater, Thought Power.
1901	Ancient Ideals and Modern Life.
1904	The Pedigree of Man.
1908	An Introduction to Yoga. Buddhist Popular Lectures.
1907	The Wisdom of Upanishads.
1909	The Changing World.
1909	Religious Problems in India.
1911	The meaning and method of spiritual life.
1912	The spiritual life, A study in karma.
1916	A World Religion.
1917	The Coming Race.
1919	Coercion and Resistance in India.

YEAR	SOCIETY AND POLITICS
1876	History of the Great French Revolution
1879	Marriage : As it was, as it is and as it should be.
1800	Land Lords, Tanets , Farms and Farmers.
1881	Free Trade, Labour and land their burden.
1881	Light Heat and sound.
1881	The History of the Anti-corn, Law Struggle.
1886	Evolution of Society.
1886	For the crown against the nation.
1886	Why I am a socialist .
1887	Radicalism and Socialism .
1887	The Socialist Movement.
1890	Modern Socialism.
1890	The Trade Union Movement.
1893	An Antobiography .
1895	Eastern Castes and Western Classes.
1895	A Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation.
1896	The Future that awaits US.
1899	The Story of the Great War.
1900	Some Problems of Life.
1912	India .
1913	Wake Up India.
1914	Women and Politics , The way out of the present difficulty .
1915	The Future of India.
1915	How India Wrought for Freedom.

contd.

YEAR	SOCIETY AND POLITICS
1915	India:A Nation; A Plea for Indian Self-Government .
1915	The Political outlook.
1916	Self-Government for India.
1916	The Bearing of Religious Ideals on Social Reconstruction
1916	Congress work.
1916	District work.
1916	Home Rule .
1916	Preparation for Citizenship.
1916	Social Service .
1917	Under the Congress flag , Home Rule and the Empire.
1917	The British of New India.
1917	Congress Speeches of Annie Besant.
1917	For India Uplift .
1917	The Indian Government.
1917	The Necessity for the Home Rule, A Nations Right.
1918	The Case for India .
1918	Notes on the Proposed Reforms.
1918	Principles of Education.
1919	Education for new Era.
1919	National Home Rule League, Who founded and How?
1919	The New Era.

YEAR	EDUCATION AND THEOSOPHY
1874	On the Religious Education of Children.
1890	In difence of Theosophy.
1891	Annie Besant and Theosophy (Lectures delivered by Annie Besant.)
1891	The Sphinx of Theosophy. Theosophy its evidence.
1892	Theosophy
1892	Theosophy and Practical Application.
1892	Why should be Theosophist.
1892	What Theosophy is?
1894	An Introduction to Theosophy.
1902	Theosophy Imperialism.
1903	Education As a National Duty.
1904	The Education of Indian Girls.
1910	Popular Lectures in Theosophy.
1912	A Sketch of Theosophy, The Ideals of Theosophy.
1912	Social Problems - The Message of Theosophy.
1913	An Introduction to Theosophy.
1913	Theosophy and Theosophical Society.
1914	Inner Purpose of the Theosophical Society.

contd.

YEAR	EDUCATION AND THEOSOPHY
1919	The Problems of Indian Self-Government .
1919	Why India Wants the Home Rule.
1921	The Great Plan.
1921	Theosophy; its meaning and its value.
1922	The Future of Indian Politics.
1923	The causes of the new spirit in India.
1923	India As she was and as she is?
1923	What is the National Conference.
1891	A Short Glossary of Theosophical Terms . (compiled by Annie Besant).
1917	Theosophical Education Trust.
1891	What is Theosophy.
1917	The Congress league Scheme
1920	Gandhian Non-cooperation or Shall India commit suci de?
1920	The Social Upheaval in progress.

Appendix No. 4

The important places and countries visited by Dr. Annie Besant.

YEAR	PLACE
1891	Visited the continent, first visit to the United States.
1893	Represented The Theosophical Society at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, U.S.A.
1894	England , Scandinavia, Australia , and Newzealand.
1895	England
1896	England and Holland
1897	United States, Canada and England
1898	Europe
1899	England, France, and Germany
1900	Europe
1902	Europe [Holland , Brussels, Berlin, Paris]
1904	England , Holland, France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.
1905	Europe
1907	Munich (European Congress) Paris, Harrogate and Brada Ford Edinburg and Glasgow, Germany (August) In September: U.S.A., The continent (Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Malmo , Stockholm, Christian Gotoberg, Milan, Turin , Florence Rome and Genoa)
1908	Colomba, Australia, Newzealand, Tasmania.
1909	London, Budapest, (European Congress) Brussels, England August-USA., (Chicago, Cleveland, Boston) October Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Italy.
1911	Burma (Rangoon, Moulmein, Meiktala, Maymyo , and Mondalay) May-England (English and Scottish towns) June-Paris-Later England.
1912	England, March-Holland, April - The Continent (Paris, Turin, Taormind , July-England August-Harrogate).
1913	May-England, July-Stockholm (European Congress)

contd.

1914	April-England , May Paris and London, Glasgow, Edinburg.
1919	England and Wales
1921	June-London, July-toured Chief Provincial Towns : Paris (First Theosophical World Congress)
1922	Colombia, Australia
1924	April-England, Paris , Edinburg, August, Hamburg (German (Convention) Araheim (Duch Convention)
1925	July - England, August - Ommen .
1926	May-Europe, June: Scottish, Convention, Glasgow, London, Holland (Netherland Convention), Dublin (Belfart, Manchester, August-USA, Chicago, (American Convention), Dec, Ojai.
1927	May: England, June: English Section Convention, London Scottish Convention , July: Amsterdam , (Duch Convention) Humburg , Copen Lagen, Stockholms Helsinki, Warsaw Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Geneva, Paris, England, Sept: Welsh Convention.
1928	June: England, July: Birmingham, Sheffield , Manchester.
1929	April : England, Budapest (European Congress) June: English Session Convention, July: Dablin, Belfast, Edinburg, Bradiford, Leeds, Cardiff, Blistor, August: USA., (Theosophical World Congress Ch i cago)
1930	June : England, Geneva Congress.

Source: *Annie Besant* (an Autobiography) TPH, Adyar, 1939. (See the introductory remarks on **Besant** life by G.S. Arundale) pp.43-44.

PLACE	YEAR OF ESTT .	NAME OF THE BRANCH	PRESIDENT
Adoni	1882	The Adoni T. S .	
Amalapuram	1901	The Amalapuram lodge T.S.	M.Narasaiah Pantulu.
Anakapalle	1921	The Anakapalle Lodge T.S.	D.Sanyasi Raju.
Ananthapur	1885	The Ananthapur Lodge T.S.	B.Subba Rao Pantulu
Bapatla		The Baptila Lodge T.S.	SA. Panchapagesh Iyer
Bellary	1882	The Sanmarga Lodge T.S.	A.Ranganatham Mudaliar.
Bellary	1916	The Maitreya Ladies Lodge T.S.	S. Karemma
Bezwada	1887	The Bezwada Lodge T.S.	T.Seshachala Rao
Bolarum	1882	The Bolarum Lodge T.S.	Rai Bahadur Venkata Reddy
Chittoor	1884	The Chittoor Lodge T.S.	P.Narasimha Iyer
Coconada	1885	The Coconada Lodge T.S.	P. Subba Rayudu
Cuddapah	1886	The Cuddapah Lodge T.S.	A.Nanjundappa
Ellore	1887	The Guptavidya Lodge T.S.	
Gooty	1883	The Gooty Lodge T.S.	N.Laxminarayana Rao
Gudivada	1888	The Gudivada Lodge T.S.	
Guntakal	1901	The Besant Lodge T.S.	Mr.Devarajulu Naidu
Guntoor	1901	The Krishna Lodge T.S.	V.Brahmachari
Hyderabad (DN)	1882	The Hyderabad Lodge T.S.	Edalji Dhanjibhoy
Kavali	1901	The Kavali Lodge T.S.	B.Subba Rao
Kadiri	1920	Sri Laxmi Narasimha T.S.	T. Narayana Reddy
Kurnool	1883	The Satkalatchapa T.S.	T.Chidamba Rao
Madanapalle	1891	The Jijnasa Lodge T.S.	R.Seshagiri Rao
Masulipatam	1887	The Masulipatnam Lodge T.S.	N.Gopalaratan
Narasaraopet	1892	The Narasaraopet Lodge T.S.	T.Anjya Sastri
Nellore	182	The Nellore Lodge T.S.	Narayana Iyer

contd.

PLACE	YEAR OF ESTT.	NAME OF THE BRANCH	PRESIDENT
Ongole	1891	The Ongole Lodge T.S.	B.L.Narayana Rao
Peddapuram	1901	Sri Krishna Lodge T.S.	P.Rajagopala chari
Penukonda	1893	The Penukonda Lodge T.S.	T.Shi vasankaran
Pradattor	1893	The Prodattor Lodge T.S.	
Rajahmundry	1887	The Rajahmundry Lodge T.S.	B.Shivarama Sastri
Rajahmundry	1917	The Goutami Mahila Divya Jnana Sama ja Lodge TS	Naga Malli Laxmi Narasamma
Ramachandrapuram	1918	The Ramachandrapuram T.S.	
Secunderabad	1882	The Secunderabad T.S.	Bezonji Aderji
Sompetta	1901	The Kodan dar ama swamy T.S.	K.Jagannadha Pantulu
Tenali	1901	The Tenali T. S.	C.V. Subramanyam
Tirupati	1898	The Srinivasa T.S.	V.Krishnaiah
Vizagapatam	1887	The Vizagapatam T.S.	Dr.Appala Narasimha Naidu
Vijayagaram	1884	The Vasis tha T.S.	
Warangal		The Warangal T.S.	V.Venkata Ramaiah
Yelamanchali	1901	The Yelamanchali T.S.	K.Venkata Narasimulu

Source: *General Report of The 47th Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society*. December, 25-28 1922, Adyar, TPH. 1923, pp. xl - lxxvi.

Appendix No. 6

The Theosophical Lodges in Madras Presidency

PLACE	YEAR OF ESTT .	NAME OF THE BRANCH	PRESIDENT
Adyar	1887	The Adyar Lodge T.S.	A. Schwarz
Adyar	1920	The Service Lodge T.S.	C. S.Tri lokekar
Adyar	1981	The Vasanthapuram Ladies lodge T.S.	Mrs. T. Raghvamma
Alampudi	1913	Shri Ganesha Lodge T.S.	B. Venkataramana
Aliyur	1915	The Kadambar Lodge	P.Sarasa Gopala Mudaliar
Alleppey	1903	The Annapura Lodge	K.S.Darmaraja Iyer
Alwar	1910	Sri Krishna Lodge	H.Hamir Singhji
Amba Samudram		The Ambasamudram Lodge	Rai Sahab.R.Subbier
Annaimalai	1904	The Annamalai Narayana Lodge. T.S.	A.A.Rajaram
Anakal	1919	The Dhruva Lodge T.S.	P.Krishna Rao
Aramboly		The Skandh Lodge T.S.	A.V.Savajna Perumal Pillai
Arni	1885	Sri. Krishna Lodge T.S.	A.V. Parisarama Nai ker
Attangudi	1914	The Attangudi Lodge. T.s.	P.N.Swaminatha Char i
Avarani	1908	The Narayana Lodge T.S.	S.Mathuranayagam Pillai
Calicut	1902	The Asoka Sankara Loge T.S.	V. Smbichekku
Calicut	1918	The Maitreya Ladies Lodge T.S.	Mr s. Annapoorna Amma
Carnbay	1915	The Cambay Lodge	C.S. Trivedi
Chidambaram	1902	The Chidambaram Lodge T.S.	T.H.Jagannatha Ayyair
Chingleput	1893	The Chengleput Lodge T.S.	Kandavaram Naraya nappa :

contd.

hittur Coch in)	1902	The Ganesh Lodge T.S. (Cochin state)	
Cochin State	1902	The Ramananda Lodge T.S.	
Coimbatore	1883	The Coimbatore Lodge T.S.	C.V.Venkataramana
Coimbatore	1917	The Vasanta Lodge T.S.	Mrs.Parvathi Ammal
Cranganore	1921	The Cranganore Lodge T.S.	K.P. Narayana Menon
Cuddalore	1883	The Cuddalore Lodge T.S.	R.Venkata Rao
Dhara puram	1922	The Sadasiva Lodge T.S.	K.Lakshmi Narayana Chettiar
Dharmadam y	1912	The Srikrishna Lodgd TS	K.K.K Gurikka I
Dindigal	1884	The Dindigal Lodge TS	P.Rajagopalachariar
Edamandal	1905	Sri Ramachandra Lodge TS	
Egmore	1909	The Satchidand Lodge TS	CS. Govindaraja Mudaliyar
Enagundi	1904	Sri Krishna Lodge TS	V.Ramachandra Naidu
Earnakulam	1891	The Earnakulam Lodge	IA. Doraiswami Iyer
Erode	1900	The Erode Lodge TS	S.T.Venkataramana
Eyyalur	1913	Sri Krishna Lodge TS	S .A.Reddiar
Hari dvar - mangalam	1909	Sri Gopalabhramavidya Lodge	V.G.Raghunatha Rajaiar
Kadakarai		Sri Venkataperumal Lodge	S.T.Tamburam Pillai
Kadamar	1913	The Kadambar Lodge TS	M.Ramalinganaidu
Kattuma- nnur - Koi l	1913	Sri Rajagopala TS	Muthukumar Pillai
Kollegal	1913	The Kollegal Lodge TS	A .B.Chetty
Kumarपालेम	1917	Kumarपालेम T.S.	A. V.Che ttiar

contd.

Abakonam	1883	The Brahmavidya Lodge TS	M.C.M. Chatti ar
Kuttalam	1917	The Kuttalam Lodge TS	S. Natesha Iyer
Algudi	1908	The Shrimati Lodge TS	V.L. Subramania Iyer
Adras	1882	The Madras Lodge T.S.	W.A.K. Chari
Adura	1883	The Madura Lodge T.S.	A.Rangaswami Iyer
Mayavaram	1883	The Mayavaram Lodge T.S.	T. Sadasiva Rao
Mylapore	1909	The Mylapore Lodge T.S.	Justice T.S.Rao
Kumari	1911	The Kumari Lodge	S.K. Iyer
Nagore	1910	The Nagore Krishna Lodge	C.H. Marathe
Namakal	1887	Namakal Lodge TS	K.S. Subramanya Sastri
Nagapatam	1883	The Sundara Lodge	
Nugambal (Changalput)	1913	Nugambal Lodge	A.M. Naidu
Ootacamund	1883	The Ootacamund Lodge	V.S. Doraiswami Iyer
Palakurichi	1903	The Palakurichi Lodge	S.Perumal Naidu
Palghat	1882	The Malabar Lodge	C.S.R. V. Iyer
Ramalinga	1910	The Ramalinga Lodge TS	
Bhargava		The Bhargava Lodge TS	
Periyakulam	1884	The Periyakulam Lodge	Dewan B.V.R. Naidu
Pollachi	1888	The Pollachi Lodge TS	D.B. Chetti yer
Ponani	1902	The Maheshwari Lodge TS	P.V. Doraiswami Iyer
Sri Krishna	1902	Sri Krishna Lodge TS	R.P. Pillai
Porayar	1915	The Porayar Lodge TS	K.Swami Iyer
Sadasiva B. Lodge	1917	Sri Sadasiva B. Lodge	A.Mahalinga Iyer
Ganesh	1918	The Ganesh Lodge TS	A.Thannu Pillai
Pursewakum		The Pursewakum TS	
Purulia	1919	The Purulia Lodge TS	
Sarada	1902	The Sarada Lodge TS	
Salem	1897	The Salem Lodge TS	P. C. Chatter y ar
Satyamangalam	1917	The Satyamangalam Lodge TS	C.K.K. Venkata Rama i ar
Sendamangalam	1916	The Sendamangalam Lodge TS	
Agasthya	1897	The Agasthya Lodge TS	

contd.

Sri Vil li - puttur	1883	Sri Natchiyar Lodge TS	K.S. Ayengar
Te leparamba		The Teleparamba Lodge	
Tanjore	1883	The; Besant Lodge	Subramania Sastriar
Telliche rey	1902	The Tellicherey Lodge TS.	
Teri zyhandar	1909	The Teri zyhandar Lodge	
Thalanyar	1913	The Natarajan Lodge	Chandra Kanta Das
Thiruppani - Vattaram	1913	Sri Maitreya Lodge	A.Krishna Naidu
Tindivanam	1900	The Tindivanam Lodge	A Muthuswamy Iyer
Timnevelly	1881	The Tinnevelly Lodge TS	A Pa l a m a l a s n a t h a Pillai
Tiruwichiyur	1911	The Shanti Ashramam Lodge	V.Krishnaya
Tiruppur	1909	The Tiruppur Lodge	Seshagiri Rao
Tiruvallur (Tanjore)	1898	The Tiruvalur Lodge TS	B.C.Gopala swami Mudaliar
Trichinopoly	1883	The Trichinopoly Lodge TS	Ayyasami Pillai
Triplicane	1898	The Triplicane Lodge TS	Rai B.T.Varadarajulu Naidu
Trivendrum	1883	The Ananta Lodge	R.Ananta Rao
Trivendrum	1919	The Padma Lodge TS	P.C.Narain Menon
Tuticorin	1904	The Thirumantra Lodge TS	Oscar Kellar
Ukkadai	1906	The Ukkadai Lodge TS	R.B.A.A. Thever
Velakari (Nagapatnam)	1908	The Ranga Lodge T.S.	R.Purushotam Naidu
Vettagaran- pudur	1913	The Besant Lodge TS	Sansasiva Mudaliar
Vedarianan	1898	The Vedavichara Lodge TS	
Vellore	1885	The Vellore Lodge TS	C.Narasayya
Villakudi	1909	The Rajagopala Lodge TS	A.R.Mudaliar
Villapuram	1900	The Vasudeva Lodge TS	S.Venkatarama Iyer
Viralimalai	1918	The Viralimalai Lodge TS	
Washermanpet (Madras)	1909	The Washermanpet Lodge TS	G.Seshacharu

Source:General Report of the Forty-Seventh Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society. December, 25 to 28, 1922 held at Adyar, Madras, 1923, pp.xl-lxxvi.