

GOKHALE AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

*A Brief Account of
the patient and persistent agitation for economic reforms
carried on by the late Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Gokhale,
in the Viceroy's Legislative
Council and outside*

BEING

**A Thirty Years' Review of the Financial and
Economic development of India.**

BY

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PREFACE.

While reading Mr. Gokhale's speeches in the Viceroy's Council, I had been often struck with the persistence, the patience, the knowledge, the earnestness and the eloquence with which he urged, from year to year, upon the attention of Government, several financial and economic reforms calculated to promote the material and moral well-being of the people of India. I was also struck with the strong impression he could make upon the official mind and the manner in which he prevailed upon the Government to adopt some of his suggestions. It is not given to an Indian, however exalted his position and however great his talents may be, to shape the policy of Government except in a very indirect way and to an extremely limited extent. Mr. Gokhale's achievement, therefore, lay in having fought against odds and in the face of disappointment and in having attained a measure of success in his advocacy of the cause of economic reform which has not been equalled by any Indian leader. Owing to his repeated insistence upon the true principles of financial and economic reform and his sound, fearless and helpful criticism of the attitude and measures of Government, Mr. Gokhale's speeches have become peculiarly instructive to a student who wants to get an insight into this subject, and wishes to form his own views thereon.

It is on account of this feature of the speeches that I have always read them with profit and pleasure. A

few days after Mr. Gokhale's death last year, I had occasion to contribute to a journal an article giving an estimate of his work as an advocate of economic reform, and later in the year, to read the speeches again along with other literature, in connection with my University lectures on Indian Finance. The idea then occurred to me of writing out a brief but connected account of the substantial contribution he has made to the discussion of various questions of economic importance and of presenting it to the public interested in the subject. I thought that such a summary would prove useful to the general reader as well as to the student-world, and this book is the realisation of that idea. I have tried to make plain, topics which are not free from technicalities and complexities and to treat them in a simple and popular way. How far I have succeeded in attaining my object, the reception the book meets at the hands of the public, alone can tell.

Mr. Gokhale is, of course, the central figure in this account, and his views constitute the main subject dealt with. But for a clear understanding of the topics discussed, a setting of the exposition of the principles underlying the various topics and of the general situation in which events occurred and measures were adopted, was felt to be necessary. I have supplied this in the proper places. Mr. Gokhale's advocacy of reforms was inspired with the uniform desire of seeking to promote the material and moral well-being of the people of India, and I have characterised them as 'economic,'—a word that is usually used in a narrower sense. I have, of course, excluded from my purview his agitation for administrative and constitu-

tional reforms, having only touched it here and there. The following pages thus trace the financial and economic development of India during the past 30 years, and will, it is hoped, make useful reading.

I am grateful to the Aryabhushan Press for the willing assistance they gave me in bringing out the book on the day of the first anniversary of Mr. Gokhale's death.

Fergusson College, Poona. }
19th February, 1916.

V. G. KALE.

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