PREFACE

This thesis work entitled ‘Dr. G. Ramachandran: A Historical Biography’ tries to reveal the life history of G. Ramachandran and his contributions to humanity. But in addition to being a biography, i.e. a simple narration of the life history of a person, I have tried to make some new studies, i.e. a comparative study of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, their similarities, their major ideologies, their differences, their influence on G. Ramachandran and G. Ramachandran’s attempt to reconcile their differences. Here, in this thesis I have tried to reveal the important constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi and G. Ramachandran’s involvement in each constructive programme. G. Ramachandran was a well known Gandhian. I have made an earnest attempt to delineate the education policy of G. Ramachandran. He was a strong exponent of Mahatma Gandhi’s Basic education. He amalgamated Gandhian education policy with Tagorian view. By founding the Gandhigram University he tried to establish a casteless society in Gandhigram. It is a meeting place of Gandhian vision and Tagorian vision of education. I have made a detailed study of Gandhigram. My earnest effort led to the finding that G. Ramachandran amalgamated in Gandhian field the holistic approach of Tagore, the spiritual guidance of Vinoba Bhave and the dynamic humanism of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the political field, I have
observed that G. Ramachandran was a freedom fighter on non-violent means. He participated in the Travancore State Congress struggle for responsible government in Travancore. At this time he was the faithful messenger of Mahatma Gandhi. Actually he acted as a bridge between Travancore State congress and Mahatma Gandhi while state congress struggled for responsible government in Travancore. In socio economic field I find that G. Ramachandran was a rural re-constructor. He worked for the downtrodden people.

G. Ramachandran left college during the non-cooperation movement under Mahatma Gandhi in 1921. From Travancore he went to Bengal to join the Visvabharati in Shantiniketan. After graduation he went from Visvabharati to the Satyagraha Ashram in Sabarmati and Mahatma Gandhi took him by hand and gave him hard training. During the following seven decades G. Ramachandran worked in the All India Spinners Association, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and in the All India Village Industries Association under Mahatma Gandhi. In fact it was Mahatma Gandhi’s idea that G. Ramachandran should become familiar with as many items of work of the constructive programme as possible. He also took his full share in the struggle for freedom going to prison several times. He had also occupied places of high responsibility as a Minister in the first Thanupillai Cabinet in Travancore, as Educational Advisor to the Rajagopalachari’s
Government in Madras and Chairman of the Basic Education Assessment Committee of the Government of India. He also worked as the Secretary of the Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and Editor of the ‘Gandhi Marg’. In 1955 he was in Europe and in America lecturing at several Universities on Mahatma Gandhi and his work and teachings. In 1962 he went to Russia along with Sri. U.N. Dhebar to press on Mr. Khrushchev, the Russian Prime Minister, the urgent need to stop all tests of nuclear devices which were poisoning the air mankind was breathing. But G. Ramachandran had himself repeatedly said that his happiest and proudest role had been as the Director of Gandhigram. Even at the age of seventy six G. Ramachandran founded a Trust, Madhavimandiram Loka Seva Trust for the memory of his mother Smt. Madhavi Thankachi and to popularize Gandhian thought. We have thus before us the life of a man who had made a place for himself outside office and in the service of the people. It is a life replete with adventurous living and we have it from G. Ramachandran himself that he had thoroughly enjoyed every shade and tone of it.

So this is the pioneer attempt to narrate the life history of G. Ramachandran in a historical perspective. The study is based mostly on primary sources collected from various archival repositories and research centres in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Delhi and Bengal. These original sources are further supplemented by published works of the contemporary and later
periods. The documents dealing with the subject are found in the Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust Archives, Ooroottukala, near Neyyatinkara, GR Library, Gandhigram, works of Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation, etc. The Government orders, circulars and the documents related to Travancore State Congress which are available at the State Archives, Nalanda, Trivandrum also add valuable pieces of information about the topic. The 'Harijan', Newspapers in different languages, articles and sources through interview also serve the purpose of this study. Journals, brochures, pamphlets, Souvenirs, Annual Reports, letters, Convocation Addresses, College Calendars issued by the Gandhigram Rural University and Gandhigram Trust and its sister institutions have helped to fulfill this thesis.

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Dr. Seettar, the former Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research, mentioned in his inaugural address of the 24th Annual South Indian History Congress, the importance of the linguists in historical studies. Here I would like to thank sincerely Prof. P.K. Narayanan Namboothiri (Retd) and Prof. V. M Jose, Department of English, K. E. College, Mannanam, for having willingly taken the pain to go through the manuscript of the thesis and brushing...
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