

limited purpose since both of them were based on the statements about the contents of the epic made by the respective authors in their works. What was required, as Winternitz noted in his review, was an Index based on *the text of the Mahābhārata itself*.

This need was admirably fulfilled by S. Sørensen's *Index to the names in the Mahābhārata* which appeared in 1925 (reprint 1963). The utility of Sørensen's Index is manifold and is not to be doubted.¹ It registers names of persons and mythological beings and their epithets, as well as names of peoples, place names, names of weapons, and the titles of *parvans* and *ākhyānas* along with the summaries of their contents.

Sørensen's Index was based on the Calcutta edition of the epic which, in the absence of a critical edition, was probably the best thing to do. However, in 1910, while writing his review, Winternitz raised the question whether it was worthwhile to undertake the preparation of an Index based on any particular version of the epic when its critical edition, as then envisaged by the European scholars, was under preparation. He, himself, however, answered the question in the affirmative, realizing full well the enormous difficulties that lay in the way of completing the task. Winternitz proved to be right. As it happened, the European undertaking had to come to a standstill during the first world war, and it was never taken up again thereafter. The Indian enterprise began in 1919 and took nearly half a century for its completion. The present *Cultural Index*, work on which may be said to have started around 1969, has just begun to appear. Sørensen's Index, the first parts of which appeared during 1904-1908, has thus served the needs of scholars for nearly a century.

With the publication of the *Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata* (Poona, 1933-1966), the need was again felt for an Index which would be based on the critically constituted text and which would not be restricted only to the proper names of all sorts but would cast its net wide so as to cover all aspects of Indian Culture. Shri Bedekar, then the lone hand in the Epilogue department of the Institute, started extracting relevant material from several *parvans* during the year 1969-70. Shri Bedekar thus may be said to have really started the work of collecting material for the Cultural Index to the Mahābhārata.

In 1971, Shri Bedekar began to be assisted in his work of extracting material by Smt. Vijaya Deshmukh. The material collected by these two scholars pertained to personal names, names of gods and mythological beings, geographical names, and many other aspects of Indian Culture. It was collected both from the critically constituted text as well as the starred passages available in the foot-notes of the critical edition.

After the sad demise of Shri Bedekar in January 1978, Dr. V. G. Rahurkar joined the Institute as Research Professor² for Epilogue and carried on the work of

1. For the merits Sørensen's Index, see Winternitz, op. cit. p. 242.

2. Dr. G. K. Bhat also worked as a Research Professor for the Epilogue for a short period of three months (June-August 1979).