

A study on Socio-Political Thoughts of Swami Vivekananda

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Abstract:

Swami Vivekananda had tried to bring the Vedantic philosophy to the mass. He opined first step in getting strength to be upholding Upanishads and believing in self. Swami Vivekananda was an important key figure in the 19th century the spiritual revival in the India. Generally he was considered as a spiritual leader without any relation to the politics. Yet he was a first Indian patriot to inspire political ideology of revolutionaries against the British Government. Although Swami Vivekananda never participated in the politics in a narrow sense but his ideology, writings and speeches strongly influenced development of modern political framing of India. Vivekananda's ideas cover almost all aspects of the social and national life including the nationalism, mass education, secularism, the eradication of casteism and women empowerment etc. Later on all the ideas of Swamiji were enshrined in the preamble and fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution. The Indian Constitution makers were much influenced by the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda. The Constitutional Assembly Members had repeatedly mentioned Swami Vivekananda while debating on new provisions of the Constitution, particularly in support of the philosophy behind the preamble and fundamental rights. Similarly the Supreme Court of India in a number of judgments has followed the ideas of Swami Vivekananda to achieve its ends. Thus, Aim of this article is to establish the relevance of Swami Vivekananda's ideas in the developing Indian Constitutional philosophy.

“Each soul is potentially divine. The main goal is to manifest this Divinity by controlling nature, external and internal.”(1)

Keywords:

Swami Vivekananda, Swamiji, Modern India, Youth of India, Modern Science, Political thought, Ideologies of swamiji, Narendra Nath Dutta.

Introduction:

According to Swami Vivekananda, the initial step that can be taken to earn inner strength and a

1 Swami Vivekananda, Pearls of Wisdom; at p.37 & 179 (RKM Institute of Culture, Kolkata; 11th Ed., 2007).
1894, in a letter written to Alasinga Perumal, Swami Vivekananda

deep analysis of self belief is by upholding philosophic perceptions of Upanishadas. Swami Vivekananda was an important key figure in the 19th century spiritual revival in India. Generally he was considered as a spiritual leader without relation to the politics. Yet he was first Indian patriot to inspire the political ideology of revolutionaries against the British Government. Although Swami Vivekananda never participated in the politics in a narrow sense², but it does not mean that he had no political ideology, in an article, published in the Madras Times, in February 1897, said --“The great national sin is neglect of the public, and that is one of the causes of our downfall.No amount of politics would be avail until the masses of India will be once more well educated, and well carefull for.”³ This statement clearly says about the establishment of his political ideologies. His writings, ideas and speeches strongly effected the development of the modern socio-political framing of India. Ideas of Swami Vivekananda cover almost all the aspects of socio-political developments. We can make a appendix on which Swami Vivekananda had given his remarks time and again: – i. Upholding nationalism ii.The Implementation of Vedantic system of education in India. iii. Achieving the social justice and a system of the equal opportunity. iv. The Steps towards socialism particularly in achieving the concept of spiritual socialism. v. The Development of marginalised classes (Dalitas & untouchables) by the adopting reasonable classification. vii.The Steps towards secularism. All these ideas are similar to those enshrined in the preamble & fundamental rights chapter. The Indian Constitution makers were very much influenced by the speeches and writings of Vivekananda. They incorporated the philosophies of Swami Vivekananda while drafting Indian Constitution. The Constituent Assembly Members had repeatedly mentioned Swami Vivekananda while debating on new provisions of the Constitution, particularly in the support of philosophy behind the preamble and the fundamental rights.

In this article, we will try to establish that the Constitution makers were deeply influenced by socio-political thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. Even in the 21st century, the Constitutional developments are based on his ideas. The Supreme Court Judges when they are developing new Constitutional philosophies often quoted Swami Vivekananda in the support of their judgements. These judgements cover a wide range of the subjects related to the various Constitutional rights and noble guidelines under the preamble of Indian constitution. Therefore, in this article, our ultimate goal will be to the establishment the relevancy of Swami Vivekananda’s ideas in the developing Indian Constitutional philosophy.

Objectives:

- To study Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy to making of Modern India

- To review the contribution of Swamiji to Indian Value System
- To find out the recommendation of Swami Vivekananda to all human being

Research Methodology:

This study was conducted based on the methods of document review to the qualitative approach of research. The information which was presented in this paper, collected from the primary and secondary sources such as-various text books, Research Articles, Research Journals, Magazines, and from E-journals. The methods utilized for gathering information were documents review, archival investigation, Representative themes that was found across materials gathered were coded and analysed for the presentation. In this study, the life of Swami Vivekananda, character and opinions on various subjects matters have been analysed to perspective of making the modern India. For that, some other documents which are related to Vivekananda's life were used by the researchers. Each document contents have been examined in depth by the researchers.

Literature Review:

The 19th century witnessed dawn of the renaissance in Bengal. Luminaries like Raja Rammohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra vidyasagar introduced new ideas of social reforms. They started protest openly against the social vices of contemporary society. Raja Rammohan Roy, who was considered as 'prophet of the new India'⁴ introduced 'the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity' in his religious and social reforms⁵ which argued for modernisation of education, abolishment of the social evils like sati pratha, child marriage etc. On the other hand Ishwar Chandra Vidhyasagar, strongly agitated for the adoption of a system of widows marriage in the contemporary Bengali society. This was vogue of their revolutionary that influenced the enactment of Sati Prohibition Act 1829 or Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856. All these socio-political movements of early 19th century has created an atmosphere, where a hero like as Swami Vivekananda could born, all these revolutionary and liberal ideas of religious and the social reforms of his predecessors inspired the young Narendranath to form his own ideology. Thus the teachings of these revolutionaries had deep influenced on Vivekananda's philosophy. He described himself that Rammohan Roy was the first man to introduce in the modern times, a spirit of dynamism in Indian society.

At the one hand, Narendranath, at the young age started studying to the Western philosophers like as Hegel, David Hume, Kant, Comte, J.S. Mill, Charles Darwin etc. and became fascinated with the evolutionism of the Herbert Spencer, on the other hand he came into the contact of

4. Dr. Bhupendranath Datta; Swami Vivekananda: Patriot Prophet 24(Nababharat Publishers; Calcutta 2nd Ed.; 1993).

Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Who ignited fire of the spiritualism in Swami Vivekananda. Thus all these teachings of the reformers transformed a boy Narendranath to the Swami Vivekananda with unique ideas and voice, liberal thoughts and developmental approaches. In all the fields of social or national life, he propounded his unique visions to the help of ignorant mass of India. His preaching regarding nationalism, education, universal humanism, equality, socialism deeply impressed the contemporary leaders and the freedom fighters, Swamiji's writings inspired the freedom movement of India & the Activists like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore etc.

Rabindranath Tagore told to the French Nobel laureate Romain Rolland – “if you want to know about India, study Swami Vivekananda. In Swamiji everything is positive, nothing negative.”⁶

His works inspired the Mahatma Gandhi to say that “after having gone through the works of Swami Vivekananda, the love that I had for india became a thousand fold.”⁷ Similarly Pt.

Jawahar Lal Nehru mentioned in his book “Discovery of India” -- “He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use the other word—of the national movement of India, and a large number of people who took an active part in the national movement in a later date, drew their inspiration from Swamiji.”⁸

Swamiji's teachings of nationalism brought a new enthusiasm in the freedom movement of India. Reading of Swami Vivekananda's books had increased a sense of patriotism; all the militants nationalist movements culminating in the Gandhiji's historic call for independence of our country were launched as the result of Swami Vivekananda's thunderous roar “Arise, awake and not stop until achieve the goal” Romain Rolland, French biographer of Swamiji said “the Indian nationalist movement smouldered for a long time until swami Vivekananda's breath blew the ashes into flame, and erupted violently for three years after his death in 1905.”⁹ Ultimately dream of Swamiji for an independent nation became true in 1947; his preaching greatly influenced the journey towards the independence.

Swamiji's Contribution to Indian Society:

Swami Vivekananda was a philosopher and a social reformer, dedicated his for the upliftment of humanity. In his dynamism of thought he emphasized on the body and soul for human excellence. Work and more work to the strive for excellence of body, spirit and mind were conspicuous in his teachings and preaching. The Man-making, character building and the assimilation of ideas was the main theme of Swami Vivekananda's education. Ancient value

⁶ www.wikipedia.org

⁷ *Ibid*;

⁸ *Ibid*;

system of India is the great heritage of the mankind. We see that our culture, history, our educational system, values, leadership and managerial process is designed by Rishis. He was the great source of the inspiration and motivation at that time. But the present education system is based on the Western standards. The modern education systems ignore the polishing and the development of inner instruments of the man, his mind and his life. It also ignores the innate divinity within self and focuses only on the body, mind and intellectuality. The lack of focus on the developing the powers of the concentration of mind is directly responsible for lowering the values and the character in modern youths. And the modern value system ignores a need for the unfoldment of innate perfection, peace and happiness of himself. At the time of freedom struggle, many great leaders of the modern India, challenged the British education systems. They also developed the powerful philosophies of the education, so as to provide to students not only the lesson of Indian heritage, but also to prepare them for future greatness of India. Swami Vivekananda is one of them. Swamiji wanted to educate the children neither only Indian values, nor only British values. Swamiji wanted to mix up those values, and want create a new value system. They spoke for the man-making and the character building education. So he accepted the Vedantic knowledge as base, acknowledge truth of the every religion and the synthesis of Yoga. Swami Vivekananda opened the gate of the future before youth, to filling them with a new spirituality of inspiration, and the dynamic action.

Swami Vivekananda, acquainted by the Indian conditions, laid a foundations of the new brand of the socialism. He defined the socialism as that doctrine, which demanded the sacrifice of the individual freedom to the social supremacy. Swamiji believed that true socialism in India, could be based on solid foundation of common people - the masses. He had decried the exploitation of lower class by the upper class. Unlike the Western socialists, he neither believed in elimination of the private enterprises, nor in abolition of the private ownership of the production to prevent the exploitation of poors by the rich persons in the society. Unlike communists and Syndicalists, he did not believe in using the violent and the revolutionary methods for quick overthrow of the capitalist system. Swami Vivekananda saw the process of the social growth and development in India. They envisioned that Sudra Raj was destined to the come in India, in the years and centuries ahead. To elaborating his concept of the socialism a little further, Swami Vivekananda stressed the belief that Sitalpru socialism should be based on the social order, in which diversity of capacity and the occupation were allowed to exist. But that privilege was totally abolished. We can say that socialism should be ushered through the culture and the mutual esteem. The main motto should be "From caste to socialism through culture." Socialism should not be divorced from the culture but based on the cultural equality. True socialism should be brought about

through a process of the progressive evolution in his economic and social inequalities, got reduced gradually.

Discussion:

According to Swami Vivekananda, the main unit of Universe or Society was Man, which was miniature microcosm of the macrocosm.... Universe. Man was an intellectual being.....endowed with depth and heights, which could not be encompassed in the purely materialistic or the positivistic philosophy. There are no any compartments in the human personality leading to the mutual exclusion and hostility in the human aspirations and values. The man was more than body and he was a moral self, This moral self sprang from his spiritual self. Thus we can say that man was essentially a divine.

One of the most important contributions of Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of the religion, as the universal experience of the transcendent Reality, common to the all humanity. This conception of universal frees religion from hold of superstitions, priest craft, dogmatism and intolerance. Swami Vivekananda believed that each and every religion offered a way to the eternal supremacy such as- supreme knowledge, supreme freedom and supreme happiness etc. This can be realising by one's ATMA is the part of PARAMATMA. Swami Vivekananda said that morality in both individual life and the social life is mostly based on the fear of societal censure. But he gave a new theory of ethics and a new principle of morality, based on intrinsic purity and oneness of the Aatman.

According to Swami Vivekananda ethics was nothing, it is a code of conduct, which helps the man to be a good citizen. We all should be pure because the purity is our real nature, it is our true divine Self or Aatman. In this way we should be faithful, love and serve our neighbours because all are one in the Supreme Spirit which is known as Paramatma or Brahma.

Swami Vivekananda believed that if the youth is determined, there can not be any work impossible for them to achieve. swamiji urged youths to have dedication, determination to the cause to attain sure success. To Pursue a challenge with utmost dedication is the really road to success, for our youths. Hence they called upon the youths to build up their mental energies as well as their physical ones. Swamiji wanted 'muscles of iron' as well as 'nerves of steel'.

His birthday on January 12 is celebrated as National Youth Day and the week commencing from that day is known as the National Youth Week. As part of National Youth Week celebrations, the Government of India holds the National Youth Festival every year. The aims of youth festival is to propagate the concept of national integration, brotherhood, spirit of communal harmony, adventure and courage amongst the youths by exhibiting their cultural programmes in a common platform.

Conclusion:

Swami Vivekananda belonged to the 19th century, yet his teachings and his life both are more relevant in today's society than in the past and it will be more relevant in future also. According to Swami Vivekananda, the initial step that can be taken to earn inner strength and a deep analysis of self belief is by upholding philosophic perceptions of Upanishadas. Swami Vivekananda had tried to bring the Vedantic philosophy to the mass. He opined first step in getting strength to be upholding Upanishads and believing in self. Great persons like Swami Vivekananda, do not cease to exist with their physical death, their thoughts and influence, the work which they done, go on a gaining momentum as well as years passed by, and ultimately they reach a fulfilment which they envisaged. Swami Vivekananda was a philosopher and a social reformer, dedicated his for the upliftment of humanity. Swami Vivekananda, acquainted by the Indian conditions, laid a foundations of the new brand of the socialism. One of the most important contributions of Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of the religion, as the universal experience of the transcendent Reality, common to the all humanity. According to Swami Vivekananda, the main unit of Universe or Society was Man, which was miniature microcosm of the macrocosm.... Universe. Man was an intellectual being.... endowed with depth and heights, which could not be encompassed in the purely materialistic or the positivistic philosophy. They motivated and influenced the youths by saying that, "Awake, Rise up and not stop until achieve the goal."

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