

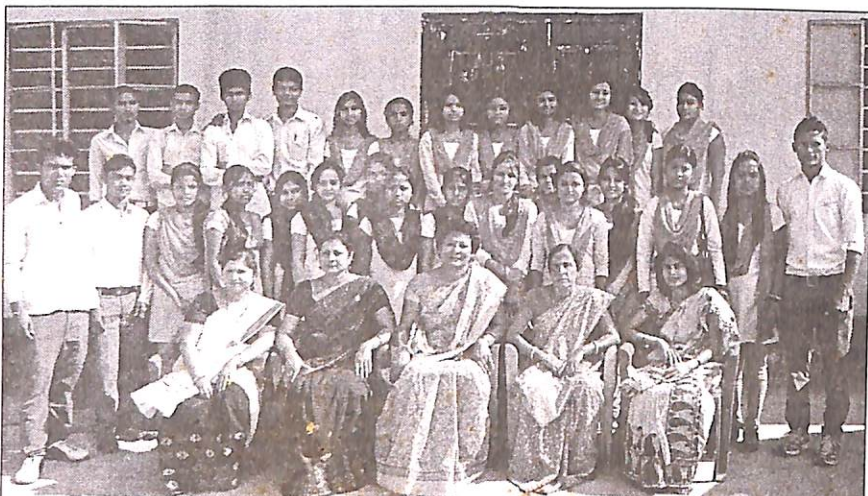


Drsti (The Vision of Truth)

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Department of Philosophy

From Editorial Desk....

Drsti, the journal of the department of philosophy of Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya, is the first attempt to reflect philosophical thinking. The title of our journal is "Drsti", because "daršana" is the vision of truth. The word "Daršana" (Philosophy) is derived from the sanskrit word "drs" meaning to see or vision. However this vision is not the vision in the ordinary sense, but the intuitive vision, i.e the vision through our inner eye, through which we can visualise the truth underlying everything.

On the great occasion of "World Philosophy Day" we have sown the seed of our journal "Drsti" and hope it will grown up from "embryo to adult organism" to reflect philosophical thinking in wider scope.

Karabi Goswami
(Karabi Goswami)

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WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY

UNESCO celebrates World Philosophy Day every year on the third Thursday in November to honor philosophical reflections around the world. It is a day for people to share thoughts, openly explore and discuss new ideas and inspire public debate or discussion on society's challenges.

In 2012, the World Philosophy Day will be held for the tenth time, with events being organized at the international, national and local levels. They will enable their participants to share a multitude of views and experiences, fully respecting cultural diversity, with regard to the main theme of the 2012 World Philosophy Day which is "Future Generations".

UNESCO leads world Philosophy Day - but not won it. It belongs to everyone, everywhere, who cares about philosophy.

On this Day of collective exercise in free, reasoned and informed thinking on the major challenges of our time, all of UNESCO's partners (national governments, their public institutions and organizations, including National Commissions for UNESCO, relevant non-governmental organizations, associations, universities, institutes, schools, UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs, Associated schools and club and so forth) are encouraged to organize various type of activities - philosophical dialogue, debates, conferences, workshops, cultural events and presentations around the general theme of the Day, with the participations of philosophers and scientists from all branches of natural and social sciences, educators, teachers, students, press journalists and other mass media representatives, and the general public.

I appreciate the efforts of the teachers of the Philosophy department for introducing such a grand day with the students of our college. This is the beginning. In future years it will be celebrated with more enthusiasm.

With lots of wishes

(Reeta Dutta Hazorika)

Principal i/c

Narangi Anchalik Mahavidyalaya

The Concept of Bondage in Reference to the Vivekacudamani



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Sankaracharya is considered to be the giant among the living legends and probably the most venerated philosopher in the history of Indian Philosophy. Even within the very brief span of a life of 32 years, this wonderful young man accomplished so much by his multifarious achievements in the reinstatement of spiritual values and regeneration of society, on the strict foundation of Vedic authority.

The 'Vivekacudamani' is a small but precious creation in the form of a dialogue between a preceptor (guru) and a pupil (sisya) where Sankara explains the way to liberation (moksa) which culminates in the ecstatic experience of one's own self. The biographers of Sankara have declared that Sankara composed the 'Vivekacudamani' (crown jewel of discrimination) in the asrama of his guru (teacher) Govinda Bhagavatpaducharya, when he was barely a teenager.

Generally Moksa is said to be the message of ancient Indian philosophers towards the human society. Moksa implies the spiritual freedom which may be characterized by emancipation, salvation nirvana, kaivalya, mukti, Moksa, self-knowledge and so on. According to the generally accepted view of Indian thought, it is not an after-death experience to be achieved in another world. It is the supreme felicity which is the eternal nature of the self. One need not go anywhere in search of liberation. It is within us and can be discovered within, if we turn ourselves towards that direction i.e. towards inwardness. Thus spiritual search for Moksa has always an inward movement leading to the realization of our inner self. Now, the concept of bondage is closely related with the concept of liberation. So let us discuss about the concept of bondage in Advaita Philosophy.

Bondage in Advaita Vadanta means- the encirclement of the self by the not-self. It is due to Avidya or ignorance, that the individual soul identifies itself with its adjuncts

(upadhis) viz. the body, senses, mind etc. which are only superimposed on it. Thus not-self is superimposed on the self.

In consistent with the Upanisadic teachings Sankara has explained the covering of self by the not-self consists of fine layers which are technically called as 'Kosas' or sheaths. They are called sheaths since they are covering over the Atman and they are five types, known as Annamaya Kosa (physical), Pranamaya Kosa (Vital), Manomaya Kosa (mental), Vijnanamaya Kosa (intellectual) and Anandamaya Kosa (beatific) and all these sheaths are gradually finer and finer. Knowledge consists in going beyond them all by means of regulated practice and coming face to face with the Atman.

It is due to ignorance that a man identifies Atman with one or more of the Kosas or sheaths. It is very difficult for the self to overcome this false knowledge and to disassociate himself from these Kosas. Only when one somehow cultivates total detachment towards them through discriminative knowledge, will ultimately obtain the true nature of the human. Let us explain the five kosas in brief:—

(I) Annamayakosa or Physical Body:-

Annamayakosa is the first layer of the covering of self but not-self. This sheath, which constitutes the gross physical body, is produced by the culmination of the gross elements is sustained by food (i.e. anna). It is a mass of skin, flesh, blood, bones and filth (Viveka Chudamani SL.154). The materialist philosopher like Carvaka identifies the self with the physical body. The materialist philosophers support the gross hedonistic ideal. When the self is identifies with Annamayakosa i.e. the physical body, then the physical pleasure (Kama) becomes the highest end of human life. Thus the Purusarthas as Dharma and Moksha are entirely discarded and Artha and Kama becomes the ideal of life.

In the 'Vivekacudamani', Sankara is of the opinion that 'Annamayakosa' can never be the self and all our bondage is due to the mistaking of the physical body with the self. Man is classified into three in the 'Vivekacudamani', among whom superior knowledge is given the highest place. Thus the stupid man thinks he is the body, the book learned man identifies himself with the mixture of body and soul and the sheer possessed of realization looks upon the eternal Atman as his self and thinks 'I am Brahman' (ibid. SL.160).

(II) Pranamayakosa or Sheath of Prana, the vital force:-

It is the next layer in the encirclement of the self by not-self. The five vital air (the Prana) along with the organs of action (Karmendriyas) constitutes this vital sheath. Sankara rightly contents that Prana can't be the self, Prana is merely a modification of

Vayu (air). It never knows in the least either its own weal and woe or those of others, being eternally dependant on the self (ibid SL.166).

(III) Manomayakosa or Mental Sheath:-

It is the third layer in the encirclement of self by not-self. Mind together with the organs of senses form the Mental Sheath. In 'Vivekacudamani', Sankara has clearly explained the function of mental sheath in the formation of world appearance (ibid SL- 168,169,170,171) etc. Just like clouds are brought in by the wind and again driven by the same agency, similarly, man's bondage is caused by the mind and liberation too is caused by that alone (ibid SL.172). So, the mental sheath is responsible for the bondage and also the liberation of the soul and the purification of the mind are essential for the removal of superposition of the mental sheath and its qualities of the self.

(IV) Vijnanamayakosa or Buddhi, the sheath of Intelligence:-

The next layer in the encirclement of self by not-self is Vijnanamayakosa. The intellect together with the sense organs forms the Intellectual Sheath (ibid. SL-184). In the 'Vivekacudamani', Sankara is of the opinion that like mind, this sheath is the product of Prakriti (maya) or matter. Though insentient by nature, it appears intelligent and conscious because it reflects eit or pure intelligence. It is called Jiva or individual soul, whose chief characteristics is- 'I- consciousness' with the feelings like 'I am knower' and 'I am doer' etc. subject to the law of Kama, it assumes different bodies, and performs good and evil actions. Atman identifies itself with the sheath of intelligence, experience, misery and happiness in the waking, dream and other stakes. (ibid. SL. 186-187)

Vijnanamayakosa should not be confused with the self or Atman. This Atman which is beyond all qualities and action is realized within as knowledge and Bliss absolute- has been superimposed by the delusion of the Buddhi, and is not real (ibid. SL.196). and this superimposition can be directly destroyed only through the knowledge of Brahman and not by any other means such as ritualistic worship, study of scriptures or philanthropic activities (ibid. SL. 203). So, the Vijnanamayakosa can't be the supreme self.

(V) Anandamayakosa or the Blissful Sheath:-

The last layer in the encirclement of self by not-self is the Anandamayakosa, i.e. the Beatific Sheath or the sheath of Bliss. In the 'Vivekacudamani', we find a detailed description of Anandamayakosa. This sheath reflects the pure bliss of atman or self (ibid. SL.207). This blissful sheath (Anandamayakosa) is the modification of nescience which reflects the pure bliss or atman. This state can be experienced by those rare few, in a small measure in their virtuous deeds. This blissful sheath has its fullest play during profound sleep, while in the dreaming and wakeful states it has only a partial

manifestation in the waking state, when the sense come in contact with agreeable object (ibid. SL.208).

According to the Advaitan, the Anandamayakosa also can't be identical with the self. It is endowed with changeable attributes. It is a modification of the Prakriti, it is an effect of good deeds. It is dependent on the gross physical body and therefore, it can't be identified with the supreme self (ibid. SL.209).

Thus, from the above discussion it is clear that according to Advaita Vedanta bondage is the confusion of self with not-self and liberation is the freedom of self from not-self. As by removing the husk grain is acquired, similarly, by removing the five sheaths the real nature of self is realized. Thus the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara has successfully explained the noble task of removing the veil of ignorance or the superimposition of not-self on self. It is only by discriminating in thought (Viveka) between the five different Kosas that we can realize the true self which is beyond the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and beatific sheaths; and the aim of Moksha in Vedanta Philosophy, thus is to realize the self effulgent Atman which is distinct from the five sheaths, the real, the changeless, the everlasting Bliss.

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VIVEKA-CUDAMANI of Sri Sankaracarya, translated by Swami Madhavananda; Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta; fourteenth impression, 1995

"Omniscience and omnipotence are mutually incompatible. If God is omniscient, he must already know how he is going to intervene to change the course of history using his omnipotence. But that means he can't change his mind about his intervention, which means he is not omnipotent."

— **Richard Dawkins, The Gold Delusion**
(New York : Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Ludwig Wittgenstein : Duty of a Genius



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Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein, as one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century, was born in 1889, April 26 at Vienna. He was the youngest son of Karl Wittgenstein and Leopoldine Wittgenstein. His charismatic personality has exerted a powerful fascination upon artists, poets, novelists, musicians, mathematicians, engineers, teachers, filmmakers, playwrights etc. Therefore, he is best known as a genius. Wittgenstein's father in his profession was an industrialist of extraordinary talent and became one of the leading figures in the Austrian steel industry. At that time Wittgenstein's home became a centre of Viennese cultural life. His mother, Leopoldine Wittgenstein was a famous piano player of a remarkably high standard. Two of Wittgenstein's brothers- Paul Wittgenstein was a famous concert Pianist and Hans Wittgenstein was regarded as a musical prodigy comparable to Mozart. Although Karl and Leopoldine's family became well-known in cultural, intellectual, and economic field in Vienna, still Wittgenstein's three brothers - Hans, Rudolf and Karl committed suicide. The first two decided to commit suicide because of their father's adamant desire that they will have to be businessmen in their profession.

Wittgenstein started education at the age of 14 years and began his schooling for three years the Realschule at Linz. Among his classmates Adolf Hitler was also one of them. During childhood stage he was very interested in Engineering and with this hope he went to Manchester, England to study the subject of aeronautics. While pursuing engineering course he became interested in purely mathematical problems. And he read the famous books- The Principles of Mathematics (1903) by Bertrand Russell and The Foundation of Arithmetic (1884) by Gottlob Frege. During this time he met Russell in Trinity College, University of Cambridge and as a result he shifted his interest from engineering to the philosophy of logic and mathematics. Wittgenstein was engrossed in logic and mathematics in such a way that Russell was compelled to declare that he had nothing left to teach him. Afterwards Wittgenstein left Cambridge and decided to live a

lonely life in a hut he had built himself in Norway. Here only he developed the idea of picture theory of meaning, which shows that a proposition is a picture that can express fact by focusing on the logical form, which is considered the common structure of all propositions.

Wittgenstein's life can be divided into two phases- the early and the later Wittgenstein. During the First World War he joined in the Austrian army, for the first two years he was not actively associated with the war and was busy to some extent in writing some philosophical ideas, particularly in Logic. However, with his request in 1916, he was sent to a fighting unit at the Russian front.

His work on logic at this time shows that logic is quite different from the areas of ethics, aesthetics and religion. But, he changed his viewpoint by saying in later period that like logic, ethics, religion and aesthetics were alike because their truths were inexpressible in the sense that insight in these areas could be shown only without being stated. At the end of the war he finished his writings and was published in book form as *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. The first line of this book is: The world is everything that is the case. And the last one is: Where of one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent. This is the only book of Wittgenstein that was published in his life time. In the preface he wrote that he found all the essential points to solve all the problems of philosophy. With this intention in *Tractatus* he abandoned the subject after the First World War and chose to be elementary school teacher in Austria.

This book at that time influenced the two groups of philosophers. The first group especially based in Cambridge includes philosophers like R.B. Braithwaite and Frank Ramsay and the other Group based in Vienna consist of philosophers like Mortiz Schlick, Friedrich Waismann and other Logical Positivists. The later group is known as Vienna Circle. Both these groups tried to contact Wittgenstein and invited him to join in the discussion of philosophy. Especial thanks in this regard goes to Frank Ramsay because he visited the small Austrian village in which Wittgenstein was teaching to discuss the remarks of *Tractatus* with him. In this way Wittgenstein came again to the subject of philosophy, ending his brief career as a school teacher. Wittgentein came back to Trinity College to work with Ramsay in 1929, but unfortunately this desire c'd not fulfill due to accidental death of Ramsay at the age of 26 years. But, he began his career again as a lecturer in Cambridge. During these days Wittgenstein had become his own critic and rejected his picture theory of meaning. He holds that the function of language is not confined to focus on the logical form of language. He shows that language has diverse functions which can be shown as - Giving orders, and obeying them, reporting an event, forming and testing a hypothesis, play acting, solving a problem in practical arithmetic etc. Wittgenstein calls these different functions of language as language games or forms of life. It means that

language games are concrete social activities, which involve the diverse use of specific form of language. By describing the diverse use of language, Wittgenstein wants to show that use determines the meaning of language. He says: the speaking of language is part of an activity or form of life. Therefore, in his later philosophy he means that the meaning of a word is not the object to which it corresponds, rather the meaning of a word is dealt with its uses in different contexts or in forms of life. This view of later Wittgenstein is found in his book *Philosophical Investigations* which was published posthumously.

Wittgenstein holds that philosophical problems arise when words are isolated from practical situations. It means that when a question goes astray from practical situations, we merge in puzzlement and paradoxes. That is why he writes- philosophy does not result in philosophical propositions but rather in the clarification of propositions. He emphatically asserts that we must bring words (like 'I', 'Object', 'knowledge', 'name' etc.) back from their metaphysical to their every day use. Therefore, he metaphorically asserts that philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday.

During last years of his life he wanted to become a psychiatrist and also thought of working on a farm in Soviet Union. He was also offered the prestigious chair of philosophy at Cambridge in 1939. Besides, he worked as a porter in Guy's Hospital in London and then as an assistant in a medical research team during World War II. In 1947, he finally resigned his academic position and moved to Ireland to work on his own. In 1949, he discovered that he had prostate cancer. And he died on April 29, 1951. His last and significant words were "Tell them I have had a wonderful life."

"That all who are happy, are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher maybe equally satisfied, but not equally happy. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable concessions. A peasant has not the capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher."

— Samuel Johnson, in *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, 1766

Women empowerment— in the vision of Swami Vivekananda



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"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing only."

—Swami Vivekananda

According to studies, during the early Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status and rights. They enjoyed freedom, good status and learning opportunities. Scriptures such as Rigveda and Upanishads mention several women sages and seers notably Gargi and Maitreyi. Rigvedic verses suggest that the women married at a matured age and were probably free to select their husbands. However, later, the status of women begun to decline with the Islamic invasion of Babar and the Mughal empire and later Christianity curtailing women's freedom and rights. The Indian women's position in the society further deteriorated during this period when Sati, child marriages and a ban on widow remarriages became part of social life among some communities in India. The Muslims brought the Purdah practice in the Indian society. The Devadasis or the temple women were sexually exploited. Among the Rajput of Rajasthan, the Jauhar was practised. Polygamy was widely practised especially among Hindu Kshatriya rulers. In many Muslim families, women were not allowed to Zanaza areas. So, medieval period is described as the darkest period in the history of Indian women in general. After Islamic rule, India was under the power of the British. The British rule had created widespread poverty, hunger and the propaganda of their missionaries. These had created a sense of insecurity among the Indians about their traditional customs and beliefs. During such a period of crisis and controversies of the 19th century, many reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda etc. appeared as a resplendent star in the Indian sky illuminating the entire atmosphere by their uncommon wit and spectacularly convincing speeches. They launched nationwide effort against the evils of both East and West.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the epitomes of India who with Sankara's intellect combined Buddha's heart, Christ's renunciation and the Prophet of Arabia's spirit of equality and the result of this holy confluence will in time flood the whole world. As Vivekananda had a cosmopolitan and a catholic outlook, he wanted in heart the proper fusion of the ideals of East and West for developing a system of women empowerment for future India vehemently criticizing the negative aspects of both the cultures.

To reform the Indian society, reformers raised a new voice of pan Indian nationalism. This first voice of protest was against the moral exploitation of the Indian society and this was to guide and provide the unique feature of the Indian freedom struggle. Swamiji was in close touch with both the core of Hindu religious thought and with the western philosophy. That Vivekananda's position was unique amongst the Indian leaders, he was able to take up the best feature of both in his work and attempt to fuse them in his dream of the future. Vivekananda's message was not the one of renunciation and mysticism that was used to hearing. Instead, he cried for work - work for the down-trodden and poor of the country, work to revitalize the society as a whole. Physical strength, moral strength, strength to work for others was his message to the Indians.

Vivekananda believed that downfall of India was largely due to the negligence of women. In the Upanisadic age, great Brahnavadinis like Maitreyi and Gargi, women missionaries like Sanghamitra carrying Buddha's message to Syria and Macedonia, all were lying buried deep due to millennium of foreign domination. The cause of degradation of Indian women, the principal reason why our race has degenerated is that we had no respect for these living images of Shakti. Manu says, "Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught." (1) "There is no hope of rise for that society where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness."²

According to Vivekananda, there is a difference in the attitude of Indian men and their western counterparts. In America, men take upon their women as a manifestation of the omnipresent force of God and treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. But in India, men believe that women are born to please them. Indians are family oriented. In India, parents often indicate that girls will be going to another household, while the boy will earn and would inherit the family's wealth. Even little boys are told that they are stronger than girls. Naturally, they grow up believing that they are superior to women and may mistreat their parents later. Here a question arises, why cannot we just tell little boys to be more sensitive towards girls rather than feeding their brains with such lame notion. Vivekananda said, "It is very difficult to understand why in this country so many differences are made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious self is present in all beings, you always criticize the women,

but say what have you done for their uplift? Writing down smritis etc., and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines! If you do not raise the women, who are the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, do not think that you have any other way to rise."³

Swami Vivekananda rightly observed that the condition of women in Mughal and British ruled India was deplorable. Women were treated rudely. They were deprived of their rights. As a result, the conditions of Indian women were pathetic. Seeing the pitiable condition of Indian women, Swamiji fell in great tension. At last, he arrived at the conclusion that women should be put in positions of power to solve their own problems in their own way. "Always people think that men can do his best because he can fight, and undergo tremendous physical exertion; women have physical weakness and noncombating quality. This is unjust. Women are as courageous as men. Each is equally same in his or her way. What man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love as the woman can? The one has developed the power of doing; the other the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance."⁴ Vivekananda believed that it is the woman who moulds the next generation, and hence the destiny of the country. So, he emphasized that woman must be educated. "Duly emphasizing the role of educated women, the first Prime Minister of our country Jawaharlal Nehru has very rightly said "Education of a boy is education of one person but education of a girl is the education of the entire family".⁵ In Vivekananda's educational scheme for India, the uplift of women and the masses received the highest priority.

Women --- "Be emboldened"; Embodiment of Goddess of Mother.

In every country, it seems that men and women have different ways of understanding and judging things. Men have one angle of vision, women another; Men argue from one standpoint, women from another; Men extenuate women and lay the blame on men; while Women exonerate men and heap all the blame on women.⁶

The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence.

Vivekananda was against early marriage. He claimed that early marriage was the very reason for the existence of so many widows, so many early births of emaciated children who would only increase the number of beggars in the country. Vivekananda was in favour of educating and supporting the daughters with as much care and attention as they do the same for their sons. As sons should be married in matured age, so daughters also should be married in matured age. Daughters should be educated by their parents. Sister Christine wrote that for weeks and months, Vivekananda would be buried in thought, creating and recreating the splendid image of the Indian women of the future, which would be a combination of the western spirit of independence, freedom and dynamism with Indian austerity, purity and chastity.

In the west its ideal is wife, in India is the mother. In India, mother is the center of the family and our highest ideal. Mother is to us the representative of God, as God is the mother

of the universe. Our God is both personal and absolute, the absolute is male, the personal female.

The rise of outstanding women administrators, statesmen, scientists, writers and spiritual teachers is gradually proving the truth of the prophetic words. Following the footsteps of Sarada Devi and Sister Nivedita, hundreds of women all over the world are coming forward with a combination of 'Mother's heart' and 'Hero's will', a combination of the purity of 'Holy Mother' and the dynamism of the 'Rani of Jhansi' or 'Joan of Arc'. Sita, Sabitri and Damayanti are the very types of the true Indian women. They are unique. So, the women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of them. They are ever chaste and ever pure wives, the ideal of the people, our national Goddess they must remain. They have gone into the very vitals of our race. Any attempt to modernize our women without inculcating the ideals of Sita, Sabitri and Damayanti will immediately become a failure.

Women in India now participate in all activities such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology etc. Moreover, scientists of Indian origin like Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams have also been to space. The position of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few centuries, from equal status with men. In ancient times, through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In independent India, women have adorned high offices. As of 2011, the president of India, the speaker, the Leader of the opposition party in the Lok Sabha and the chairman of the ruling party are all women. In India, women are still exposed to numerous social issues.

To Swami Vivekananda, "If women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country; then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country."⁷

Books and references :

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2. C.W. of S.V., Vol. 7, p. 215
3. Ibid, p. 214
4. C.W. of S.V., Vol. 2, p. 25-26
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7. Ibid, p. 220

Humanism : Sartre and Roy



Dr. Karabi Goswami

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Jean Paul Sartre and Manabendra Nath Roy, two contemporary philosophers preached two different humanistic philosophies giving primary importance on human freedom. Started as Communists, both developed their own ideology in their humanistic approaches, i.e. Sartre's Existential Humanism and Roy's Radical Humanism.

Jean Paul Sartre the most prominent Existential philosopher of the modern time preached existential humanism. As an atheist and a humanist, his primary concern was man. He wanted to analyze human life or reality in all its aspects, such as man's experience, perception, emotion and the varieties of mental life. He analyzed man as an individual with all his weaknesses and gave much importance on human freedom. To him 'man is condemned to be free'. Sartre states 'Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all'.¹

M.N.Roy's Radical humanism primarily concerned with human freedom. He says, "Man was not born free. Man was born to be free. To be free is the essence of human life".² Sartre equalized human existence and freedom. He says 'Man does not exist first in order to be free subsequently; there is no difference between the being of man and his being free'.³ But, Roy thought that man is not born free, because he is slave to his circumstances in which all the forces of nature are weighting him down. Therefore, man has to struggle against nature for freedom. To him quest for freedom became identical with the struggle for existence.⁴ Sartre was a believer of absolute freedom of man. So, responsibility was automatically associated with freedom, for man condemned to freedom carried the burden of the whole universe on his head. Whatever happened in the world had its significance because of man. He thought that it is man who builds up the world by his actions. Sartre says in his book Existentialism and Humanism "Even if God existed that would make no difference," for peace and social justice in this world can be achieved only by man. Sartre is also a radical humanist in this sense.⁵

Roy's concept of freedom was quite different from Sartre's. For Roy, freedom is a process; it is a continuation on a higher level of intelligence and emotion, which is related to man's biological struggle for existence. He conceived freedom as the driving force through which man can standardize his life.⁶ Roy thought that 'will to freedom' and 'rationality' are two basic traits of human nature and all progress in human history follow from this human

nature. The 'will to freedom' supplies the urge and 'reason' shows the way.⁷ Thus, Roy gave much importance on the rational faculty of man through which man acquire freedom.

Both Roy and Sartre explained man as an individual. Roy in the first thesis of his New Humanism says, "Man is the archetype of society. Co-operative social relationship contributes to develop individual potentialities. But the development of the individual is the measure of social progress. Collectivity pre - supposes the existence of individuals..... collective well-being of individuals". Sartre had given more importance on the freedom of individual and equated it with individual existence. He thought that to produce a fruitful realization of freedom, man has to relate himself to other beings, because freedom of the individual becomes meaningless unless the individual man understands that his freedom is to be operated in the society. So, man has to discover a way in which he come into a relation of solidarity with others.⁸

Roy's concept of morality is connected with his innate rationality. 'Morality is a dictate of conscience and conscience, he explained as an emergent novelty of the process of evolution, not a mystic inner voice'. Roy has thought that it is part of the nature of man, as a biological organism, to be rational and moral, and as such that he is capable of living with others in peace and harmony.⁹ As Roy considered individual as the centre of his philosophy, so he regarded that only moral man can constitute a moral society. But man cannot be moral unless morality is inherited in himself, unless the urge for moral responsibility is natural and essential in man himself. As the consciously moral behavior of man, must result from his rational thinking, so rational ethics is possible.¹⁰ Again, Sartre's thought on morality, centered round his ideas on freedom, his notions of value, his conception of human relations or the relation between individual and society or group, as well as his conception of ideal society. As Sartre gave too much importance on human freedom and choices regarded that there is no rational justification for what man chooses, but what is chosen contains the reasons for those actions, which are to be done. Therefore, rationality is intra-choice for Sartre, and rightness and wrongness of human actions judged by this rationality not by any external law. Sartre emphasized the decision of man as the welfare of society. When man decided for himself, he is also decided for whole humanity, because he thought that man is responsible for the whole of mankind. In his book 'Existentialism and Humanism', Sartre had taken his theory of morality to the level of social theory, because he thought that no morality is possible which can be considered only as the morality of the individual.¹¹ Thus though the moral theory of Roy and Sartre are individualistic, their approaches are different. Both judge moral basis of human action, through internal sanction that is 'innate rationality' of Roy and 'intra choice rationality' of Sartre. Sartre's morality is therefore subjective. He thought that individual, as a subject cannot pass human subjectivity. Sartre says 'what we choose is always the better and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all'. Sartre thought moral value cannot exist in a non-

human world and value has objectivity in the human world. Describing two levels of consciousness, Sartre said that in the first level, man has an awareness of object, which will fulfill his want and the second stage of consciousness is about the value of the object. The first one is called by him as pre-reflective and the second one as reflective consciousness, which can be called moral consciousness.¹² Sartre is a believer in the absurdity of the moral. And absolutely free individual is not bound by moral compulsion as well.

But Roy divided moral values into two kinds changing and basic values. Changing values are dependent upon social conditions but basic values are not causally dependent upon material conditions. Basic values are eternal and immutable, but enriched and amplified in the course of human experience.¹³ Thus, values are subjective according to Roy because they are the voice of our conscience. But he thought that immorality results from some objective condition such as property. Sometimes man's character is responsible for immorality, so man's character should be reformed which is possible through the training of will and education in values. This training also will be secular in character and would awaken the conscience of man.¹⁴

Thus, Sartre's philosophy is subjective which wants man to face every situation boldly and make decision without any support of society, customs or tradition. However, Roy's philosophy places man in the supreme position considering the objective conditions.

The meeting point of both the philosophy, that is, Sartre's Existential Humanism and Roy's New Humanism or Radical Humanism is that both criticized Marx's concept of human freedom. The economic determinism of Marx is differed from self-determination of Sartre, which is also criticized by Roy. Both Roy and Sartre regarded Marxism as a philosophy of their time, though neither of them spent full length with Marxism rejecting it as a dogma.

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Gandhi and his vision for women empowerment



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Introduction:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, as a major social and political reformer, played an important role in attempting to eradicate the social wrongs committed against the women of the country through ages. He strongly believed that a society can develop rapidly if takes all sections of the people together into its fold, rich and poor, high society people and low caste people and both men and women.

Gandhi's political ideologies are strongly based on humanitarian values, which were a reflection of his spiritual self. For him, politics could not be divorced from social factors. To Gandhi, social emancipation was as critical as political emancipation. Gandhi, throughout his life, struggled very hard for the upliftment of the socially downtrodden, making significant contributions for the development of the status of women in India. Women under his ages took a milestone to step towards reestablishing their identity in the society. Gandhi's inspiring ideologies boosted their morals and helped them to rediscover their self-esteem. Not only there was a general awakening among the women, but under Gandhi's leadership they entered into the National mainstream, taking parts in the National movements. In Gandhi's words, "To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women." The views expressed by the Mahatma and the actions undertaken by him may not go entirely with the current times because the times have irreversibly changed but the honesty of the Mahatma, the love and respect he had for the women, can never be doubted. He is truly the best friend of the women of the world.

Gandhi's perception of women

There was a marked difference of Gandhi's perception of women from that of other reformers. The stance taken by other social reformers and leaders, prior to Gandhi

created a helpless image of the Indian women. With the emergence of Gandhi, a new conception of women gradually gained currency. For Gandhi, women were not mere toys or dolls in the hands of men neither their competitors. According to Gandhi, "Intellectually, mentally and spiritually women is equivalent to a male and she can participate in every activity." In his speeches and writings, Gandhi said that in many matters, especially those of tolerance, patience and sacrifice, the Indian women is superior to the male.

Gandhi invoked the instances of ancient role models who were epitomes of Indian women hood like 'Draupadi', 'Savitri', 'Sita' and 'Damayanti' to show that Indian women could never be feeble. Women have equal mental abilities as that of men and an equal right to freedom.

As a practical thinker, Gandhiji tried to understand the problems and sufferings of women. He had attempted to find some practical solutions of their problems. Gandhiji, while he stayed at home, tried to help his wife, Kasturba, in her daily household duties. In western countries also, these days' men are encouraged to be with their wives during the delivery and the men are supposed to pitch in with diaper changing, feeding etc. Gandhiji practiced this very modern concept 90 years ago in his own family.

Role of women as Envisaged by Gandhi:

Regarding the role of women, Gandhiji once said, "Womanhood is not restricted to the kitchen." He opined and felt that, "Only when the woman is liberated from the slavery of the kitchen that her true spirit may be discovered." It does not mean that women shouldn't cook, but only that household responsibilities be shared among men, women and children.

In a letter written to Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur from Wardha on 21 October 1936, Gandhiji writes, "If you women would only realize your dignity and privilege and make full use of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But man has delighted in enslaving and you have proved willing slaves till the slaves and the slave- holders have become one in the crime of degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make women realize her dignity. I was once a slave- holder myself but Kasturba proved an unwilling slave and thus opened my eyes to my mission. Her task was finished. Now I am in search of a woman who would realize her mission. Are you that woman, will you be one?" In this way, Gandhi was able to devote himself to such a mission and formula type views on all aspects of a woman's life, political, social and domestic and even the very personal.

Gandhi laid more emphasis on the role of women in the political, economic and social emancipation of the country. Under his guidance and leadership women came out from their houses and joined India's struggle for independence.

As far as the economic emancipation of women was concerned Gandhi felt that female folk could be engaged in the cottage and small scale industries of the village such as spinning, broom, basket and rope making and oil processing so that the rural women can supplement to the family income. Hence empowerment of women has to be the ultimate goal to improve the quality of the society and development of the economy.

Gandhi's voice against the social evils:

In the view of Gandhi, although he had great respect for the traditions of the country, he also realized that certain customs and traditions of the Indian society were anti-ethical to the spirit of development of the women of the nation. To quote Gandhi, "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition; but to sink in them is suicide". Therefore, he was completely against many social customs, traditions, norms and values and social evils like child- marriage, widowhood, the dowry system, the pardah system and prostitution, the witch- hunting etc which are threats to the development of the society.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:

The Gandhian Model:

According to Gandhi, the three important factors that promote women empowerment are: education, employment and change in social structure. All the three components are equally important and mutually related. Simply development of education of the women would not automatically empower them. The case in point is Kerala. The state has hundred percent (100%) literacy but the women folk are not even today free from exploitation. This is because of the fact that the traditional keralite society is yet to be reformed to provide equal rights to the women in de facto terms.

Conclusion:

It can be said without an idea of doubt that Mahatma Gandhi experimented in all these three fields a century ago and shown the way for the empowerment of women and the improvement of the status of women in the country. But practically we can see completely an opposite picture of the empowerment of women. It is a great regret for us that even today employment of women is still restricted. They are not allowed to enter into certain jobs, beyond doctors, nurses, teachers and clerical jobs. In the family,

the women become the victim of domestic violence and in the society they are also exploited by the social evils like dowry system, prostitution, witch- hunting etc. Again two- thirds of the world's illiterates are females. Of the millions of school age children not in school, the majority are girls. And today, HIV/AIDS is rapidly becoming a woman's disease. In several southern African countries more than three- quarters of all young people living with HIV are women. Again in many countries due to the current world food price crisis a significant percentage of women eat only once. These women are already suffering the effects of even more severe malnutrition, which inevitably will be their children's fate as well. Studies show that when women are supported and empowered all of society benefits. But even today at the beginning of the 21st century Gandhi's vision remains unfulfilled.

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"Man's duty is to do unselfish service to others; and he should do such service not in order to do good to others, but rather because it is the very law of his being. There are some people who think that we can afford to act as we please in matters that affect only ourselves, but no man can, in fact, do anything in the world which does not, directly or indirectly, effect the welfare of his fellow-men.

— M.K. Gandhi, *The Art of Living*
(Bombay : Pearl Publications, 1961)

R.N. Tagore's views on Education



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Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet of India, was also one of the foremost leaders of Indian renaissance in art, music, dance and literature. He used his great genius for about half a century, in fostering the spiritual and political revival of India and devoted his life to the establishment and development of a cultural and educational centre, the Vishvabharati with international ideas.

Rabindranath Tagore was primarily an educationists rather than a political thinker. His philosophy of education draws its inspiration from ancient Indian philosophy of education. He put emphasis on 'Naturalism' for framing educational model. In education, freedom is the basic guiding force for inculcating interest within a student who will derive inspiration from nature to pursue any branch of knowledge he likes. According to Tagore, children should be brought up in an atmosphere of freedom. Freedom means the liberation of all aspects and powers of the child's personality. Tagore wanted to implement freedom in the field of education. With that object he had opened Shantiniketan, Sri Niketan and Brahmachari Ashram.

Tagore felt that the education of a child is the most important work in building up the life of the nation. He wanted to train human beings for freedom, for peace and for justice. In his school, he brought about an atmosphere of freedom, of sympathy and of service. These are Tagore's cardinal ideals of education. He could not accept the view that true education would in any way stifle the very essence of freedom.

Tagore favoured open-air classes. The deadness of walls made everything dull and gloomy. Tagore frustrated with the denatured situation of academic learning process. He insists that no mind can grow properly without living in intimate communion with nature. Those situation presents to the learner a situation, which stimulates his imagination and creativity, and combats the boredom of mechanical learning. The ideal school, according to Tagore, should be established away from the turmoil of human habitation under an open sky. It is nature which will be the guiding force to inculcate the spirit of learning in the mind of a student to pursue the education he likes. It will shape his behaviour and conduct.

Tagore considered lack of education as the main obstacle in the way of India's progress and at the root of all its problems. Tagore urged to attempt a change in the aims of academic learning and thus offered his own remedial idea. According to him, academic learning becomes joyless and mechanical if it is looked upon merely as an instrument for getting jobs and for material and financial gains. The aim of education should be to develop and nourish our beliefs, emotions and imaginations, which enable us to assess, evaluate, and take up appropriate attitudes towards our experience in the milieu in which we live. Tagore viewed the traditional academic learning as merely a knowledge -factory, a mechanical system producing students with machine ground knowledge for the purpose of being examined and graded. He maintained that the aim of education should not be producing like a machine made product in a factory, because each individual has a distinctive character of his own. There fore, education system should attend to it carefully, it should enable each individual to blossom in his own way.

The medium of education also became an important point pertaining to Tagore's idea. The use of English in education prevented assimilation of what was taught and made education confined only to urban areas and the upper classes rather than rural areas. Therefore, if the vast rural masses were to benefit, it was absolutely essential to switch over to the use of mother tongue at all level of education. He was an advocate of the medium of instruction through the mother-tongue. He argued that to educate India's entire population and restoring the flow of culture from the educated classes to the rural population would not come true unless the mother tongue was adopted as the medium of teaching.

Tagore attached great importance to the fine arts in his educational curriculum. To him, game, dance, music, drama, painting etc. should form a part of educational process. Students should take active part in these finer aspects of human life for these are very essential to enrich soul.

Tagore was aware about the rural poverty of our country. So, he wanted to eradicate it through education. The practical training imparted in different crafts to the students will make them skilled artisans in their field. They can remove the poverty of the rural bulk by applying their education helping thereby in the process of rural reconstruction. Tagore demonstrated in his school Shantiniketan, the value of education in the vitalization of Indian society.

The aim of education, as Rabindranath Tagore sees it, is to give one a sense of one's identity as a total man and to bring education in harmony with life. A total man is the one who thinks of himself first and foremost as human being. The aim of Tagore's pattern of education is independence, perfection and universality. The educator must create an environment in which the personality of the student undergoes a free, perfect and unrestricted development.

Rabindranath Tagore, by his efforts and achievements, is one of a global network of pioneering educators, who have striven to create non-authoritarian learning systems appropriate to their respective surroundings. He did not want education to remain confined to the cities and to particular classes of society. Tagore's education marked a novel blending of the ideas of the East and the West. Tagore's philosophy of education may become a representation of the Eastern philosophy apart from other like Islam, Confucianism, taoism, and Mahayana Buddhism. The spiritualism of Indian philosophy and progressive outlook of the western people were blended together to give rise to an educational philosophy which marked its distinction in comparison to other educationists of India. He had his own original ideas about education which had led him to establish the educational institution Vishva-Bharati in Shantiniketan with the intention of re-opening the channel of communication between the East and the West. He was a successful mediator between the Eastern and Western cultures.

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"Houses are built to live in, not to look on; therefore let use be preferred before uniformity."

— Francis Bacon, "Of Building", in *Essays*, 1597

Descartes— Cogito Ergo Sum



—Dibakar Chetry

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Cogito or Cogito ergo sum, is the latin translation for Descartes famous claim "I think therefore I am". This is pivotal part of the argument for existence that he gives in the meditations. It is the first thing which he recognised as definite after doubting the existence of everything else. He says we must doubt that we are all being deceived by an evil demon so just be an illusion. But it doesn't make sense to say that we could be deceived about the way we think. The fact that we can have thoughts about the state of the world (regardless of what we doubt) means that there is some 'I' that exists. Perhaps there is an evil demon making us believe in a false reality, but there must be something in existence that the demon is manipulating. This is the thinking thing that Descartes calls 'I'. The claim "I think" or 'I am thinking' does not requires us to have any knowledge or evidence of the world. It is not based on anything else; therefore it does not rely on the truth of a claim that could turn out to be false. From here, Descartes goes on to affirm the existence of God, as he knows his belief and thought are real (even if they are not true). The cogito can only assure Descartes of his own existence, not the existence of any one else, and we can only use it to know of our individual existence. This is because we can only use it to know of our individual existence. Similarly it can only verify our existence at the point in time when we declare 'I think' because anything in the past 'I was thinking' or the present, could be something the evil demon has deceived us on. There has been much debate over what Descartes means when he uses the word 'think'.

Many people, argue that 'I think therefore I am' is analogous to saying 'I am walking therefore I am' but this is not acceptable. The true interpretation of it is that Descartes is saying I think therefore I am a thinking thing. From saying that 'I am walking' I can only claim the existence of walking thing, not a thinking thing and even that can be called into doubt. One cannot claim to exist on the basis of walking because one could be being deceived into believing one had legs or one could be dreaming that one can be sure about the events that do not require any interactions to have taken place.

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