

HINDUTVA'S REPRESENTATIONS OF VIVEKANANDA

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CHANDRA SHEKHAR HOTA



**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067-INDIA**



Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, India

Tel. : 011-26704413
Fax : 011-26717603
Gram : JAYENU

July 16, 2009

It is certified that the dissertation entitled "**Hindutva's Representation of Vivekananda**" submitted by **Chandra Shekhar Hota** is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of the University. The dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree in this University and in other University and is his own work.

The acts of commission and omission are mine.

Chandra Shekhar Hota
CHANDRA SHEKHAR HOTA

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROF. PRALAY KANUNGO
SUPERVISOR
Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

PROF. VALERIAN RODRIGUES
CHAIRPERSON
CHAIRPERSON
Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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INTRODUCTION

For a long period, the representations of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) have remained polemical and divided. This polar image of Vivekananda is a product the reading and the way scholars perceive him. Sometime, these perceptions are more ideological than objective, political than social and personal than academic. In contrast, in common mind parlance, Vivekananda is still a religious figure, a nationalist, an awakener of 19th century India, a messiah of masses, a genuine Vedantist and the savior of Hinduism. Representing him as a nationalist, sometime his humanitarian contribution is overlooked. Sometimes, his philosophic postulations are over-emphasized at the cost of his love for the poor masses. What the current study proposes is the recognition of multiple representations of Vivekananda. It is however true that every representation has some substance as well as certain limitations. Therefore, this study, while acknowledging the multiple representations, seeks to present a holistic Vivekananda without any distortion. It recognises that every representation suffer from some limitations and Vivekananda is yet to be seen objectively.

Vivekananda is an inspiring figure of the contemporary India. His ideas still attracts a lot of attention among people across the age. We still strive to achieve his youthful energy and compassionate outlook. The tolerance, acceptance, humanity, universal brotherhood and spiritual awakening of India pronounced by Vivekananda still inspire our livelihood. Vivekananda continues to inspire the generations through his revolutionary ideas on religion, society, people, nationalism and on spiritualism. As a prominent figure of contemporary India and a man with contemporary relevance his ideas/thinking is more useful to us. Needless to say that Vivekananda was a critique to the evils of religion, a critique to the evils of society and true believers of positive values. His incommensurable love for the people and masses has made him the champion of people. Contemporary India is indebted to Vivekananda, for his immense contribution to the society and for its betterment. His contribution needs to be acknowledged properly.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in the recent times. We see the multiple guises on Vivekananda, some are true and some are profane. His outlook was so broad that nationalist saw the nationalism in him, socialist the socialism, religious protagonist the religion and spiritualist the spiritualism. But this did not occur positive all the time. The religious protagonists never intend to recognize the spiritual aspect of Vivekananda or nationalist could use the true religious value of Vivekananda. Socialists became late recognizing Vivekananda and his revolutionary potentials. Thus these hide and seek caused a problem in the genuine representation. Although it is also to be discussed that from where does this representation come from and what are the literary sources of that?

It is true that Ramakrishna Missions produce the Vivekananda literature and it becomes public through it. But the representations and the Production of the literature by Mission are itself contested. A scholar like Swami Tyagananda reaffirms this and argues that in the recent times the representation of Vivekananda has become more problematic. Tracing upon the contemporary trend of representation, Tyagananda argues that most of the discovery on swami Vivekananda is possible through literature by him or on him. It is primarily through biographies and the writing of Swami Vivekananda in the forms of lectures and letters. The earlier hagiographic literature however sees Vivekananda as a part of the Devotee trends. However, Tyagananda acknowledges the mixed and ambiguous textual legacy left behind Vivekananda and proposes the same is the cause of the divergent Views. As a public speaker, his role as a writer lessens further. Thus there might not have much logical connectivity with his works. These indeed cause the rise of the skeptic literature. And in a way leads to the multiple representations. The complexity in Vivekananda's writing and the literature given to us are also not that innocent, Makarand Paranjape argues. For him, our problem is that we are not going to the original sources and accepting the literature given to us by Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He cites an example of a letter of Swami Vivekananda which was found in the dusty files of Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, which was than a princely state of Khetri. These letters found its expression first in the *Times of India* 24th February 1999. These two letters had much peculiarity. In the original letter it was mentioned that Vivekananda was encountered with a chetty, a psychic and astrologer, who blessed him with some bibhuti. There were

no punctuation in that letter and it was coupled with many peculiarities. But when the letter first published in 'Prabuddha Bharata' most of the things changed including the correction of punctuation. The most out standing change was the change of the ending reverence of Vivekananda towards the Maharaja of Khetri; it was changed from "yours obediently" to "yours in lord". The most remarkable point here is that we are not getting the originals of Swami Vivekananda but a refined literature whose sponsorship lies in the hand of the Mission. This interpolation on Vivekananda however happens due to the paradoxes of Swami Vivekananda's writings. It is embarrassing to find that the complete works of Vivekananda is not properly arranged to study his ideas but to present it in front of the reader without any subsequent thinking. When I mean of paradoxes, it includes both hagiographic and hermeneutic literature. To give one more example, Marie Louis Burke says that Vivekananda was given a Visiting professor chair at Harvard University where as Rajgopal Chattopadhyaya deny anything sort of this. He even refutes of Vivekananda's swimming of the sea and meditating in the rock. In many ways I have dealt in my chapters with the personality cult in the representation of Vivekananda. Personality cult and its representation can reflect the personified character of a scholar but again it needs to be seen in the context of the work of the philosopher. The devotee literature and some other literary writings fall in the same trap which only describes the manifestation of Vivekananda-personified as extraordinary and divine. Even Hindutva falls in this prey though they use the Swami both hagiographically and hermeneutically. Personality representation is not necessarily in the cost of anybody's academic contribution. Here however I am not denying the correlation between life and the contribution to academic work. My intention here is not to doubt the credentials of Mission or of Vivekananda but what I believe is that these representations should be rational, reason oriented and true to be the best of its nature. Vivekananda should not be represented what he is not and should get due representation for what he is. This can show us a true Vivekananda. Hence discussion on the multiple representation can gives us a broader picture of Vivekananda. Then only we can refine and go forward for genuine representations. By the way it is our primary duty as a scholar to check the misrepresentation and felicitate a true image of the legendary figure. We felicitate representations but discourage the distortion by challenging it. Same with the case of

Vivekananda, he should be represented properly without any preoccupations and prejudices.

In my dissertation I have tried to show that trend. It has been divided into three chapters. And each chapter is distinct in own ways and shows the uniqueness. However, all chapters are interlinked to each other. The first chapter is entitled as “Multiple Representation of Swami Vivekananda: A Survey of Literature”. In this chapter I have discussed about various representations of Vivekananda. I have started it from the view that Vivekananda can be seen from context than content. It seeks to argue that Vivekananda was a product of time and the situation of 19th century India. It evolves as a categorical imperative and hence can help us representing the swami in a better way. In this portion my major focus lies on the fact that, Vivekananda was influenced by the colonial India, Sri Ramakrishna and from Brahma movement. There are many other ingredients also which might help Vivekananda to be a Vivekananda. This contextual analysis that’s why can give a true spirit to us to enquire about Vivekananda properly. While dealing with some other representations I have majorly divided it into various schools of thought and tried to envisage it as a perception. First I have in brief tried to discuss about the representation of Swami Vivekananda by Ramakrishna Mission. I have termed this representation as the “divine manifestation” representation. The major idea behind this is to show how devotees and dedicated swamis and workers see Vivekananda. This includes the quotation from Mission and literature related to it. Beside this, it intended to adhere some other schools also which configure and see Vivekananda. These schools are nothing but the congregation of scholars who believe in particular representation of Vivekananda. In this context I have divided it in to various sections accordingly the scholar see him. Firstly, I have discussed the philosophic, Vedantic and spiritual representation of Vivekananda. It sees vivekananda as the foremost philosopher, a true Vedantic and an ardent spiritualist. Secondly I have showed the representation of Vivekananda as a missionary Hindu and a religious figure. In this section I have extensively tried to show the view of Vivekananda on religion on other faith and on modernization of Hinduism. I have also discussed here the critique of religion by him. As we know that after Vivekananda only the Swami cult famous in public sphere and the

public role of Swami in India was sought. In this regard, the swami, society, seva and sangathana plays a vital role. Thirdly, vivekananda was seen as a representative of the east, who defused much confusion of the western scholars about India, Indian people and Hinduism. Here Vivekananda's attitude on oriental scholars and their critique also has been discussed. Fourthly, Vivekananda's nationalism and its representation have been discussed. The two most striking features of this chapter is that it deals with the Marxist representation of Vivekananda and the representation of Vivekananda in a vernacular literature taking Oriya into account. Some other distinct representation which does not fit into any school, I have preferred to keep that separate. However, I have dealt all the representation with much love, care, respect and criticality. The aim of this chapter is to show the diverse representation of Vivekananda. However, the authenticity and the credential of this representation are still open for evaluation.

In the second chapter I have discussed about the "Hindutva's Representation of Vivekananda". This directly had its reference from the first chapter where Vivekananda is seen as a nationalist. But subsequently these nationalist Vivekananda was changed into Hindu nationalist. Hindutva's representation is based on this perspective. However, Hindutva's representation I have discussed in my chapter detail. I have majorly focused on the fundamental principles of Hindutva and its commonality with Vivekananda. This has been widely drawn from the literature of Hindutva esp. from Organizer, the mouth piece of RSS. Beside this the Hindutva scholars' view on Vivekananda has also been taken into account. I have also discussed about the symbolic representation of Vivekananda by hindutva, which is a crucial entrenchment of the later on the former. I have also quoted scholars who believe that Vivekananda was a Hindu Nationalist narrating their substance and cause for doing this. However, the nature and content of Hindutva's representation has been mentioned in a special way. Here I have narrated the understanding of Golwalkar on Vivekananda. Finally a critical evaluation on the relationship of Hindutva and Vivekananda has been discussed. It is with the hope that the representation may give us a picture as how the Hindutva looks as Vivekananda. Is it as a Hindu nationalist or as a physically fit arrogant Hindu Swami? These all often asked questions would be a major area of concern.

Third chapter discuss how Hindutva represents Vivekananda through Vivekananda Kendra. Hindutva has created institution to fulfill the vision of Vivekananda. This is called Vivekananda Kendra, whose head office situated at Kanyakumari. This is what I have discussed in this chapter as how an institution established in the name of Vivekananda represents Vivekananda. Before going through the representation I have dealt with the politics in building Vivekananda Kendra. Here I have majorly derived my sources from Organiser. It was covered widely in the literature because of the deep involvement of RSS in building the Kendra. On the other hand the projects, seva activities, festival, specter of influence, its educational initiative, rural development and north east programmers are discussed. This is to let the reader know about the ideology, function, mission and the works of Vivekananda. A clear understanding of Kendra activities nevertheless helps us in knowing the mission they accomplish and the place of Vivekananda in it. Finally in this chapter also I have given a critical evaluation on the relation of Kendra and Vivekananda. Fundamentally I have raised one question through this, does the works of Kendra endorse Vivekananda's idea or it fulfills its inherent ideological prophecy through Vivekananda.

Thus, this dissertation makes an earnest attempt to capture the glimpses of the multiple representations of Vivekananda and understand them critically, with a special reference to Hindutva.

CHAPTER-1

Multiple Representations of Swami Vivekananda: A Survey of Literature

This chapter will widely cover the literature on multiple representations of Vivekananda. Its primary aim is to show the absence of a homogenous approach in representation Vivekananda. These multiple representation constructs polar, divided and divergent images of Vivekananda: as a divine manifestation or as a philosopher of the east, as a religious preacher or as an ardent nationalist, a fiery patriot.

The Context

The approach to modern Indian Political thought is not only challenging but also a task of thorough reasoning. In the contemporary time, we have failed to categorize many thinkers appropriately. The space given to these thinkers are insufficient for the philosophy/ philosopher of Indian political thought. It difficult to understand why India got confused with the cultivating of the best intellectual mind.¹ For instance, neither the economic theory of M.G Ranade nor R.C. Dutt has been explored and appreciated properly. Thus the discourse of the Modern Indian Political thought need to be seen very carefully without any prejudices or from a pre determined position. These also further insulate that, why no Indian political thinker has got appreciation for their work. The failure in the engagement with Indian thought has raised many questions for us further. This inability to carry forward the legacy of Indian thinkers has produced much hermeneutic difficulty. They are either suppressed by the facts of history or distorted by various interpretations. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) is perhaps one among them.

Born in the patches of colonial Bengal, Vivekananda played a vital role in the Religious resurgence of 19th century India. He was a Hindu Saint, patriot, religious preacher, nationalist and a living epitome of universal brotherhood. Due to him Indian spiritualism got a moral prestige in the West. Thus many newspaper of the west termed him as- "Cyclonic Swami". Whereas other termed him as the evangelical's Hindu missionary,

1. Baljit Singh, 'The Source of Contemporary Political Thought in India: A Reappraisal', *Ethics*, Vol. 75, No.1 (October 1964), p. 57

who gave a new dimension to Hinduism. ² Thus it is a common perception that Vivekananda tried his best to bring the lost Hindu pride and ascertain in a positive way. Vivekananda has learned a lot from his master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The training of Vivekananda from Sri Ramakrishna was rather a part of divine project than that of a myth making. ³ The idea of Universal Symphony among different Religions is perceived well by Swami Vivekananda. The capable Sisya of a great Guru was not only being confined within the narrow line of sectarian thinking but he has a wider faith in entire humanity.

Religious Reforms and 19th Century India

Vivekananda was born in such an India which was witnessing a multi-facet challenges .The first one among them was to re-establish Hindu identity and re-define the idea of Hinduism. The second one is to reasserting the pride of India in abroad. Beside these well known factors, one needs to see Vivekananda in a contextual manner. ⁴ It is evident that, Vivekananda was a Brahmo for some period of his life before coming to Sri Ramakrishna. ⁵ These leaning might have helped him to understand of religious reforms in India. This in his later days enabled him to reject all the dogmas of religion. Vivekananda's attitude towards the reform movements – was a product of time. . His rejection of evils of Hinduism and re-establishment of the idea of Vedanta is the example of that inheritance of that reform movement. This time frame of Indian reformist helped Vivekananda to understand the genesis of Indian society. ⁶

² Shankari Prasad Basu, *Introduction to Vivekananda in Indian News Paper (1893-1902)* , Calcutta, P-39

³ Narasinga Prasad Sil, 'Vivekananda Ramakrishna: An Untold story of myth making Propaganda', *Numen* , vol-40, NO-1, Jan- 1993 p- 50

4. Roman Roland, *The life of Swami Vivekananda and Universal Gospel* , Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 2008, p- 283

⁵ See Sujata miri, 'Vivekananda's idea of Religion' in *Dialogue*, Vol-5 No-4, 2000, p. 38

⁶ See G.M. Jagtiani, 'Swami Vivekananda redeemer of our faith', Bombay, 1984 p. 29

Orientalist Construction and India' colonial subjugation

The other context was the writing and the research of the oriental scholars of the west. The writers of west had many ill-informed ideas about India and its representation of Indian society, culture, religion was not that real and authentic, which could able to grasp the true picture.⁷ Thus the mission of Vivekananda to the West was a retreat for the scholars. It is a essential for orientlists to go into the deep of Indian culture, society, religion and explore the roots. So Vivekananda's mission to west was a resistance to oriental description of India.

On the other hand, the consequence of Colonialism was struck in the mind of Vivekananda. His mission in this regard was a realization of domination and subjectivity of colonialism. It was remarkable that Vivekananda tried to re define the Western notion on India and Hinduism. In a letter describes that, India is looked upon by the world, "as three billions of earthworms' assembling and fighting against one another".⁸

Vivekananda was against the religious conversion. He describes that conversion and service are two different things and accused the missionary of converting the poor even in the odd time luring of all material prospers in the name of service.⁹ Thus Vivekananda had many duties to perform; he had to thrown the evils of Hinduism and establishing the supremacy of the spiritual entity of it. He had to be a part of the reformation of Hinduism, preaching value and ethics through service and goodness. On the other hand, he had to convey the message of the east to the west reestablishing the idea of the spiritual India. Swami Vivekananda that's why took up the task to debate with West about Hinduism, orientalism, Missionaries, orthodox and religious fanatics of 19th century India. Thus it is clear that, Vivekananda is a response to the situation of 19th century India which was a colonial India. His primary motive was to represent the novel idea of India, Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. Hopefully, situating Vivekananda in the framework of colonial India

⁷ Fred Delmar, 'Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter', Rawat Publications, jaipur, 1996; p. 123.

⁸ Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, 9 volumes, Mayawati memorial volume Edu. Calcutta, 2006, See Volume -8, Letter No -41 page 2 -111

⁹ CW, Vol.I, 'Religion not the Crying need of India', p.20.

will-re-evaluate his idea and will rescue from the miss-appropriation of modern time. Thus Vivekananda should be seen in a larger, Socio-political and Cultural context of history.

Problem of Representing Vivekananda

When there is an urge to see Vivekananda in a holistic way beyond polemics and division, still confusion arise among scholars, where to locate Vivekananda. As a result of which gives rise to multiple interpretations of him and his ideas. Some turns into shallow admirer whereas some try to criticize Vivekananda. However, these divisions in the do not come from a single phenomenon. Even the writings and speeches of the Swami are many ways responsible for that. These are so ¹⁰contradictory and complex at times that, true representation becomes a problem.. Earlier the biographies written were adultery and later scholars saw it in a different way, as a human being with hallow divinity. This confusion in representing Swami Vivekananda comes out of the limited textual legacy left behind by Vivekananda. That's why, the literature on Vivekananda are mainly divided between devotee literature, skeptic's literature and secular literature. Needless to say, Vivekananda was not a scholar who wanted to publish himself in a scholarly banner but he was a religious preacher. And the preachers some time speak s according to the audience. Surprisingly, Vivekananda says the same thing differently when it comes to different audiences. Consider the example of Vivekananda's view of women in India, he says in abroad about the greatness of Indian ideal womanhood and criticized the idea of western notion of seeing- women only as wife. He reminded the west that, man in India is incomplete without the women. But the Vivekananda talks about the miseries of women when comes to Indian audience¹¹. These contradictions make the reading of Vivekananda more complex. But some scholars argue that the speech of Vivekananda has some relevance. According to them, Vivekananda spoke and these utterances are different from a text. This separation of utterances from text has three major aspects. These are as consciousness, as intention and as transmission. But the

¹⁰ See the "Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, vol- 2, Advaita Ashram", Calcutta, 2009, p-503(Hence after CW

¹¹ CW- VOL-3- P-505

speaking of Vivekananda has proved the scientificity of knowledge and performance which often de mystify the existing trend of knowledge and science. He ultimately spoke about personal knowledge and freedom which can liberate human being from poverty and ignorance.¹²

This problem in reading Vivekananda gives rise to multiple representations. Scholars working on Vivekananda do not agree with single set of argument on him. This division in Vivekananda scholarship makes the academic pursuit vulnerable and further gives rise to the distortion of his ideas by various schools. Moreover, all schools representing Vivekananda do not necessarily portray a distorted picture but there scholarship provides some insight to the study also. The differences among scholars, so succinctly, enlighten the academic project of Vivekananda. Thus, it is necessary to discuss in detail about the representations of Vivekananda by various schools of thought and profound scholars. Hopefully these discussion will clarify the confusion, regarding the images persist over Swami Vivekananda. More arguably, it will have an impact in clearing the fog on Vivekananda, who is some time only seen as a fiery orator of Hinduism or a patriot with immense nationalist spirit. Evaluation of various representations and understanding of these can provide a holistic approach to the life and works of him. This will felicitate both the study of Indian political thought and study of Indian philosophy.

MULTIPLE REPRESENTATIONS OF VIVEKANANDA

It is clear that there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. This heterogeneity almost makes the representation very complex, contradictory and multiple.

Vivekananda as a divine Manifestation

The literatures of the devotees of Vivekananda present Vivekananda as an extra ordinary figure. The publications of Sri Ramakrishna Mission especially endorse this idea. It started its monastic order from Vivekananda. For them, Vivekananda was a living

¹² Parsasarathy banerjee, 'Science and polity in the writings of Swami Vivekananda', *Journal of Human values*, 2007, p-135

epitome, a propagator of service towards humanity and a lovable disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Here Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Nikailananda, Swami Gokulananda and Sister Nivedita's writings on Swami Vivekananda can be seen in the light of our hagiographic discourse. Marie Louise Burke, Roman Roland, writing by Eastern and Western disciple, Reminiscence of Vivekananda are among the major works of the Mission. This schools of thought to be taken into account, essentially, due to the clarification of the fundamentals writings on Swami Vivekananda. Even one can't reject "Prabhuddha Bharata" and "Vedanta Kesari" two magazine by Advaita Ashram and Chennai Ashram of Ramakrishna Mission. However, the devotee representation of Vivekananda is not complete, as it hardly possesses the critical analysis. For example Sister Nivedita goes on to arguing that Vivekananda use to see Hinduism as whole and was a part that inspired Indian nationalist struggle. She describes Vivekananda's philosophy all complete, culturally, politically, socially and economically. Complete¹³ what can be argued here is that, Vivekananda scholarship must be read as concerted reaction to various situations. Such devotee account is largely available; most of them are uncritical and loaded with reverential tone of hagiographers. However, scholars keeping themselves away from the stream deconstruct the myth of Vivekananda. They try to revamp the notion of devotee literature and bring the genuine interpretations. For example, Marie Luies Burke's, "Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries" has been criticized by Rajgopal Chattopadhyaya. The later has discussed that, Vivekananda was not offered a chair at Harvard (as argued by Burke), as there are no evidences.¹⁴ There is of course a little space within the mission literature to go critical on Vivekananda. Thus taking critical literature on Vivekananda can help in de mytholise him, producing a nuanced representation. After all Vivekananda can not be seen either as a superhuman saint or only as an ordinary man. Thus a look at the critical literature helps us in understanding the complexity and contribution of Vivekananda to the discourse of knowledge. But it is surprising that, the critical literatures are not sufficient of Vivekananda or his philosophy in total. Rather it is an independent evaluation. This

¹³ The complete works of Sister Nivedita, VOL-1. "AS THE MASTER I SAW HIM" Advaita Ashram,culcutta, 2006, PP-157-160

¹⁴ Rajgopal Chattopadhyaya, *Swami Vivekananda in India: A Corrective Biography*, . Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1999, pp 359-364

independent evaluation seemingly helps, giving an objective interpretation of Vivekananda. There are scholars, who believe in this school. They neither provide a concrete critique to Vivekananda's philosophy nor do they reject it or praise it. These liberal scholars, in a way provide a ground to understand Vivekananda, in a manner of objective analysis. However, these liberal, objective scholars are not free from their inherent contradictions. There are debates and dialogues among these scholars regarding the nature of philosophy of Vivekananda. Of course, dialogue and debate gives new dimension to philosophy, churning and polishing it further. Nevertheless, it constitutes a part of the discourse of modernity in academic pursuit. Many scholars of eminence fall in this category, who seek to locate Vivekananda and his contributions; in the way they read it. Their reading provides a wide range of argument to us. Some of them describe Vivekananda as mere nationalist, some go on to say about the philosophic intervention of him in the world, some even argue that, he was the messiah of the poor, downtrodden and marginalized. More interestingly, he is being seen as a challenge to the European construction of India and the orientalist preoccupation. Besides this, there are many images attributed to Vivekananda. These indeed remind the scholars of Indian philosophy about the "Biswa Rupa" of Sri Krishna. This talks of one in many and many in one. But the multiple images of Vivekananda- like Viswa Rupa of Bhagwat Gita, carried out by various scholars, provide us a spectrum to see Vivekananda the way they read.

Vivekananda as a Philosopher, Spiritual Thinker and a Vedantist

Scholars think Vivekananda a true spiritual man. For them, Vivekananda talked about religion, which was far more universal, all pervading and inclusive. He never wanted a Hindu converted to Christian or Moslem to Buddhism, for him one must stick to one religion understanding the unity among all religion. Here the bond of unity is spiritual. It is timeless, deathless, it is pure consciousness. It treats every religion as equal, distinct and unique having a particular authentic implication. Thus Vivekananda talk about, religion as realization, not a doctrine, dogma or talk.¹⁵ The idea to see Vivekananda as

¹⁵ See AMiya Kumar Majumdar, *Understanding Vivekananda*, Sanskriti Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta, 1972, p.33.

spiritual hero of India comes from his idea of Vedanta, which trace its roots from hymns of Veda to the treatise of Sankaracharya. "I am thou" is the essence of this. The absolute, infinite, unconditional Brahma is the central theme of this. But if the Brahma is one, how can we solve the diverse and persisting differences of the world. The real essence of Vedanta is to let people know about the differences, multiplicity, forms etc, which is called in one word- "Maya".¹⁶ So this spiritualization, however does not keep human being away from religion but making a him/her a part in it. For Vivekananda, one must seek God, must realize God, feel God. That is religion, which endorses the spiritualization of India. Religion, for Vivekananda was an embodiment of spiritualism, which dwells in the inner part not in the outer congruence.¹⁷ Scholar even term Swami Vivekananda as "Living Vedanta", because he gave Vedanta a lively dimension. It was modified as the living relationship between man and man, man and Brahma. This entails that, Vivekananda's idea of Vedanta is from the point of view belongs to "language beyond history."¹⁸ The philosophic orientation of the swami becomes more reflective, when one comes in to the four fold path of salvation. The four fold paths are Bhakt Yoga, Gyana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga. These four teach human being very basics of life and make them spiritually awaken. Thus philosophy for Vivekananda is central to the philosophy of life. It produced four key words, Abhaya, Asanga, Ahinsa and Ananda.¹⁹ These representations quite clearly say that, Vivekananda was a philosopher per excellence, who proved the unanimity of spiritualization and made the philosophy of Vedanta more reliable. This contribution in deed makes Vivekananda a spiritual guru, a true philosopher and a profound Vedanta scholar.

¹⁶ See William Halbfass, 'Practical Vedanta', in Vasudha Dalmia and von Stietencron(ed), *Hinduism A Reader*, Oxford, New York, 2007 pp- 170-180

¹⁷ See for the detail, 'Vivekananda's idea of religious', by Sujata Miri, *Dilouge*, 2003, VOL-5, NO-4 PP-67

¹⁸ Badri Nath Chaturvedi, *Swami Vivekananda : the Living Vedanta*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2006, p-13

¹⁹ See for detail the introduction of Amiya Prasad Sen, *The indispensable Vivekananda*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2006

Vivekananda as a Hindu Sannyasi

However, beside this philosophic representation, there are many representations are being attributed to Vivekananda by the scholars. The most contradictory and complex one is his idea of religion. The representation of him as a religious preacher, thinker and a man of religious practice makes his role more acute, as how to see the idea of religion of Vivekananda. As of the early discussions enumerated, some scholars see his idea of religion as a philosophic and spiritual orientation. However, this view is not agreed upon. Many believed that, though Vivekananda talks about the ideal religion which encompasses all other religion as true, still becomes the profounder of strong Hinduism and Hindu identity. Some says that, Vivekananda merely modernize Hinduism, giving it a new dimension. It argues that the nature of Hinduism and the image of Hinduism in the contemporary times has a definitive link with Swami Vivekananda. From 1893, Swami was in this direction, even how to shape the Hinduism. Thus, he undertook many debates with the intellectuals of the time. Vivekananda was born to search the true nature of Hindu tradition. For the scholar, Vivekananda propounded three major elements of Hinduism, in his speech at Parliament of Religion. The first one is Hinduism has an ancient origin. The second is, it has vast followers and finally, it possesses the idea like, tolerance and acceptance.²⁰ thus, Vivekananda's idea of religion that's why crosses the boundary of many polarities. For him, Religion carries multiple meaning. It may be adoration of God, may be a pragmatic world view that contributed towards the positive development of self and society. It may also even a cultural paradigm that can help in increasing the characterizing people or nation. For him, religion should be used for practical use of society but could not be dragged out to the common place of expectation.²¹ Some says that, the idea of religion of Vivekananda is sacrosanct. For them, Vivekananda's message had no sectarian intention. When he spoke at parliament of religion, he talked about all gods, about the universal religion, about universal being.²² This idea of Vivekananda, argue many scholars, makes him truly secular. For them,

²⁰ See 'Swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism' by William Radice (Ed), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998, pp-5-8

²¹ Amiya Sen, *Swami Vivekananda*, oxford University press, New Delhi, 2000, pp 18 – 19

²² M. Shiva Ramakrishna and Sunita Roy(ed), 'Reflection on Swami Vivekananda', Sterling Publication, New Delhi-1993 pp-24-26

probably Vivekananda is the foremost thinker to highlight the secular elements of Hinduism. He thrashed away all the so called sacred constituents. He pursued the secular goal in order to attain the desire level of religiosity.²³ Sticking to the same, it is believed that, Vivekananda's idea is also a challenge to fundamentalism. It talks that the idea of Vedanta is all embracing and never create the idea of "the other". It accepts the novelty of acceptance, tolerating and maintaining the brotherhood among various communities. Of course, there is no idea of superiority of man or race in Vedanta. Vivekananda said, I am ready to go to Mosque of Mohammed, Christian Church.....and want to enlighten the heart of all human being.²⁴ Where scholars believed that, Vivekanada's religious ideas were lean towards self perfection. It is not contradictory or antagonistic to other philosophic ideals of religion. It is moreover an occupation of the life in India.²⁵

On the other hand, Vivekananda is seen as a religious revivalist by many scholars. For them, Vivekananda rescue Hinduism from the shackle of its evil interpretations. Where as at one point, he talks of high spiritual plane of Hinduism at the same time he criticized the evil practices of Hinduism. He was moreover, a part of the religious reform movement who comes under the chronology of Swami Dayananda to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. His quest to make it a pure Satatanist, revitalizing and reestablishing the ideal Hinduism, gives him a status of religious revivalist of 19TH century India.²⁶ However, the status of religious revivalist to Vivekananda was not received well by some scholars. They prefer to say that Vivekananda simply re construct Hinduism and gave it a positive direction. They believe that there are primarily three reasons why Vivekananda should not be seen as a revivalist. Firstly, religion for Vivekananda was a part of the quest for ultimate realization. Secondly, his visit to U.S.A and Europe is to be seen as a preacher of a religion. Finally, his attribute to Vedanta, which is advaita and believes in non-dualism- A philosophical entity. He did not ever enter in to deep religiosity but stated all his

²³ Jayanti Jagatadeb, 'The sacred and the secular: A Study in the philosophy of Vivekananda', Upagupta Publisher, Berehmpore, Orissa, 1991, PP-3-8

²⁴ Nemai Sadhan Bose, 'Swami Vivekananda and the challenges to fundamentalism', in William Radice(ed), Swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism, Oxford, Delhi, 1998

²⁵ Bimal Prasad, 'An Anthology on Swami Vivekananda', Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994 pp-2-14

²⁶ Amiya P Sen. 'Hindu Revivalism in Bengal 1872-1905', Oxford, New Delhi, 1993

philosophic position according to need of society. It is also evident that Vivekananda did not go abroad to preach Vedanta but to collect money for the poor of India.²⁷

However, eminent Vivekananda scholars do not want to see Vivekananda as simply as a revivalist or a constructor of neo-Hinduism. But for them, he was greatly influenced by various other cultures and religions. This in a way shape and sharpen the understanding of Vivekananda. The theosophists argue that, Vivekananda has an unusual relationship with theosophists. Vivekananda rejects the theosophist's argument and stated a direct empiricist dictum, which was opposite to the theosophists view. Theosophists believe that, this legacy of the rejection of theosophists by Vivekananda was carried out by his Master Sri Ramakrishna. It actually points out the relationship between Vivekananda and theosophists, which was political but not cordial.²⁸ Like the theosophists, many scholars trace the roots of Vivekananda's educational back round, which was mostly anglicized. This makes them to come to the conclusion that, Vivekananda's view on Christianity was a by product of that training and the encounter with western scholars. The writer's view, this might have changed his thinking on Christianity vis-à-vis propelled him to dialogue with Christianity.²⁹ Swami Vivekananda's encounter with Christianity might give him an ample opportunity to learn a lot. But it is not simple enough. Writers even trace about the eclectic intend of Vivekananda. For them, though it is difficult to trace the roots of the absolute origin of his eclecticism. According to it, the robe of the holy man never made of whole cloth but stitches together from discarded rags. Born in to the parliament of culture, tutored in the cosmopolitan class room of Calcutta, transmitted by the magnetisms of a modern mystic and impelled by India's missionary role to the west, he embodied many connotations. This proves his enormous credential to be eclectic.³⁰ This influence of Christianity further seeks his missionary role, as many termed him as missionary Hindu who founded the spirit of missionary Hinduism. The idea of

²⁷ Tapan Raychaudhary, 'Swami Vivekananda construction of Hinduism', in William Radice, *Swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism*. Oxford, 1998

²⁸ William W. Emilsen, 'Vivekananda and Theosophists', *Journal of Indian History*, vol-lxiii, April-Dec- 1984, Part-1-3, pp- 199-216

²⁹ Arvind Sharma(Ed) '*Neo-Hindu view on Christianity*', E.J Brill Publication, Leaden, Netherlands, 1988, pp- 82-105

³⁰ Brian A Hatcher, *Swami in the Wonderland : Vivekananda's Eclectic Hermeneutics*, in *Eclecticism and modern Hindu discourse*, Oxford, New York, 1999 p-47

missionary Hinduism for them has three steps. The first one is that, he objectifies Hinduism. The second individualize Hinduism and finally he universalizes it. The last one was probably in the mind of Swami Vivekananda. For the author, Vivekananda not only raise funds and technology for the poor masses but flooded the west with the fragrance of Hinduism. But the condition here is that, it is possible only due to his encounter with the west.³¹

Vivekananda: The Representative of the East

Question arises that, is it true that most of the ideas propagated by Vivekananda was a product of the encounter with the west? This indeed a part of Vivekananda project, many authors argue. As a path finder of neo- Hinduism, Vivekananda traces on the idea of Vedantic inclucivism. And through this idea he encountered the west. A Hindu self representation and awareness was clearly seen in Vivekananda's writing. Scholars allege that he was even keener to take up Hindu principles out side the boundary of nation. He was very often admired India and Hinduism on the west and materialism of the west in the East. So he was a perfect understanding between India and Europe.³² Nevertheless, this understanding has also suffered by rifts, as some points out, Vivekananda encountered west and vice versa. The scholar of the first school (Who believes that Vivekananda influenced east) argues that, Vivekananda is a product of enlightenment. He was the product of that Nineteen Century Bengal which was a mixture of piety, the worldly morality and cultural self assertion. Moreover the last is provoked by challenges of missionaries and Christianity with European criticism of Hindu ways. Cultural self assertion was very much there in Vivekananda, which later took the form of- spiritual superiority of India. Primarily, Vivekananda was aware of all other religions and hence show his love for all. In his article "Prachya O Pachyatya", he destined the nationhood of each country and talked about the mutuality of East and West. For him, where as the earlier is dharma driven, the later is moksha. Hence the means and end of the former is more valuable. Digging quite significantly on Western civilization, Vivekananda says

³¹ Torkel Breke, 'Conceptual Foundation of Missionary Hinduism', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 23, No.2, June 1999 pp- 203-214

³² William Halbfass, ' *India and Europe, an Essay of Understanding*', State University of New York, 1988, pp 216-246

that East should teach spiritualism to west and learn materialism from the same. This treatise becomes clearer, when we come to his writing “Bartaman Bharata”. Here Vivekananda pitted one against the other³³. Thus scholars belong to this group says that for Vivekananda, Europe was reconsidered. This East vs. West or Spiritualism vs. Materialism evolved as a separate entity in 19th century. Many forefront intellectuals of the time contributed to the debate. Vivekananda was one among these, who supported the polar image stimulated by a highly idealized and mystical image of India. But the interesting point is that, the description of Western spiritualism as defective was rather a response to British Colonialism in India. On the other hand the use of Indian spiritualism as a counter to materialism helped in forming an authentic Indian identity and later resulted in Indian independence.³⁴ Vivekananda perfectly know the polarity of east and west, Occident and Orient. He told it in Colombo, “A plough man in the west knows about politics but not of religion but it is opposite in India”. Thus he says Hindus have an inward vision where as West has an outward vision. Hindus put dirty clothes after bathing where as westerners put clean clothes in a dirty body.³⁵ However, Vivekananda was not only an encounter to the west but a challenge to the European scholarship and orientalist interpretation on India and Hinduism. This argues that Vivekananda’s Mission is a critical engagement with orientalist essentialisation of his days. He was an ingenious voice and response to the misrepresentation. His defense of India and Hinduism in the west is cyclonic and best possible defense of the existing knowledge of the period.³⁶

³³ Tapan Raychaudhury, *Europe reconsidered, perception of the west in Nineteen century Bengal*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1988 p-8 (See also chapter three – 103-118)

³⁴ Ursula King, ‘Indian Spirituality and Western Materialism : an image and its function in the re interpretation of modern Hinduism’, *Social Action*, Jan-March-1978 pp 62-86

³⁵ Dermot Killingly, ‘Vivekananda’s western message from the East’, in William Radice, *swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1998.

³⁶ Richard King, *“Orientalism and Religion: Post Colonial theory, India and the Mystic East”* Rutledge’s, London, 1999 Also see David Kopf, *British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance*, University of California press , Berkley, 1969

Vivekananda as a Nationalist

Where as, the encounter of Vivekananda with western civilization produced a polar image of spiritual vs. material, the consequences of this were not simple. This produced a self assertion of identity and pitted against the colonial administration for nationalist struggle. However, scholars who looks at Vivekananda, simply as a nationalist, fails to adhere the ideal nationalism pronounced by him. The representation of Vivekananda, from a nationalist back round, has sheered much debate further. Some argue that, the excessive assertion of India as nation with strong Hindu identity created the monopoly of majority over the minority, providing a base for cultural nationalism. Mixing of religion with politics and terming it as the core of a nation as put forward by Vivekananda can result in polarization of communities, giving a clear mandate for communalism and fundamentalism. Thus many scholars believe that he is a strong profounder of Hindu nationalism³⁷. However, the writings of Vivekananda may not provide such substance to carry this legacy. He was a nationalist for many, as his rousing call from Kanyakumari to Himalaya, produced a sense of nationalism which was, “a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind”³⁸ for years, within the shot span of his life, he played a role of an itinerant prophet of reascent India. He who helped in discovering lost soul getting ready not only to recapture the glorious past but also to save the world. The prominent force here is that, Vivekananda was a true nationalist who contributed novel for the enlistment of Indian nationalism. As we have seen above, there are two way representations of Vivekananda. One believes that, Vivekananda provided a base for Hindu nationalism and other believes that he simply strengthen Indian nationalism. But some scholars neither agree with the both. For them, there is a reluctant alliance between religion and nation in the writings of Vivekananda. Acknowledging the incredible patriotism of the Swami, scholar’s view that, the recent interpretation of religious nationalism in India is not his contribution. For the scholar, Vivekananda endorsed a legacy which underpins the radical spiritual authority on the basis of Advaita Vedanta. This was internationalist in its scope,

³⁷ See Jyotirmaya sharma, *Hindutva : exploration of the idea of Hindu nationalism in India*, Penguin Viking, 2003, p -184

³⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, ‘*The Discovery of India*’, Doubleday and co, New York: 1960 pp-253, 256

place and plan. The other reason is that, his view took over the nationalist portray as liberation. There is an urge in his work for the peaceful construction of India, mitigating all differences. The Hindu way of life for him was a part of inviolate space and autonomous from colonized outer space. This shows that, Vivekananda's writing does not provide any substance for the alliance of religion and Indian nationhood. If something is seen even, that are co-option and to be seen without any narrow levels.³⁹ It is quite obvious that Vivekananda had an immense love for India and Indian people. And he deployed religion and philosophy suitably toward the material employment of society. He once told to Sakram Ganesh Deuskar, the editor of Hitabada that, "Sir, as long as a dog of my country remains with out food, to feed and take care is my religion, anything else is either non-religion or false religion". He did not blame only colonial rule for India's subjugation but blame India that it could not insulate from all evilness. For him, India's fate sealed the day she invented the word "Mleccha". Being positive of the national ideal, he still believed that, because of this rule, India wills finally re exposed to the main currents of world History. To put it according to Sister Nivedita, The Mugals according to swami Vivekananda accepted India as there home but the foreigner can not do that. This school primarily believed that, the genuineness of Vivekananda's nationalism started in de colonizing the Indian mind. Pointing out the paradoxes of our national ideal, Vivekananda said that, the European has adopted Gita where as the Indians have adopted the meekness of the Christ. For Vivekananda thus Indian Nationalism is the upliftment of ideal virtue, which can put India in equal footing. No one should be a teacher or students but every one will be friends. This egalitarian tendency and positive self assertion was probably the nationalism Vivekananda wanted. As a critique of India⁴⁰ and as a believer of India Swami had a decisive nationalist role. However scholars do not even see the alliances of religion and nation as problematic, for them it created a nationalist discourse and constructed the idea of neo-Hinduism. This view tries to put forward the liberating

³⁹ Rini Bhattacharya Mehta, 'The Missionary Sannyasi and the burden of Colonized: The reluctance alliance between Religion and Nation in the writings of *Vivekananda*' *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East*. Vol. 28, No.2, 2008

⁴⁰ See for detail the introduction of Amiya Prasad Sen., *The Indispensable Vivekananda*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2006 pp14-16

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potential, especially through swami Vivekananda's attempt to mould in to the identity of modernity, national unity and equality. For the author, Vivekananda is distinct in a way from other Hindu religious preacher because he was far cry from the parochial version of orthodox Hinduism which others try to popularize. Rather he tried to give a common base of spiritual unity among all the religion and sects. A scholar arguing this line believes that, nationalism was expressed as a defense of modernity, the anti colonial struggle. This was aimed at foreign cohesion and broad unity among colonized Hindu. It was Vivekananda who contributed most significantly to unite them. Here, Hinduism is an agency of modernity and it was used as nationalist discourse for India's own cause.⁴¹ Thus it is quite evident that the idea of Vivekananda on nationalism has multiple shades. Each of them try to take there own guise. Due to this the nationalism of Vivekananda has remained in the contested domain of debates and discussions in the academia.

Vivekananda in Marxist Literature

The rise of leftist parties and the rise of right wing radical politics in India started around the same time of early twentieth century. Though, its genealogy can be traced back from far long, still it got an institutional mandate in this period. The ideological debate within the left, probably did not gave much space to Vivekananda earlier. But later they realize the commonalities of idea between Marxism and Vivekananda. Nevertheless, it is also true that the right wing politics got an easy access to Vivekananda in comparison to left. Perephs, this copy right of Vivekananda by other kept the left in dilemma, as how to use Vivekananda. It is also the fault of the leftists to back treat from Vivekananda, which gave others a clear mandate to do what ever they like on Swami Vivekananda. Swami's non recognition from other spectrum of society, gave an illogical legitimacy to other political ideology to use their hegemony and discretion over Swami Vivekananda. However, the understanding of Vivekananda by the left came out as an encounter with other political ideology only. They inherited the idea that, Vivekananda can not be simply

⁴¹ See for detail Samita Basu, *Religious Revivalism as Nationalist Discourse : Swami Vivekananda and its construction of New Hinduism in Nineteen century Bengal*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2002 p121

a prisoner of one camp, but he has an immense role in the resurgence of the ideals of socialism and Marxism. Needless to say, the Soviet scholars were in advantage position in compare to Indian left in acknowledging Vivekananda. They used Swami Vivekananda's progressive ideas and radical outlook to re construct the society. They also acknowledge the socialist ideal, moral ingredients and humanist ethics of Vivekananda.⁴² It emphatically accepts that, Vivekananda started a new stream of reform movement in India. He was the Indian philosopher per excellence, whose contribution bought a revolutionary change of society. So for the scholar, he was a revolutionary socialist.⁴³ Consciously or unconsciously , Indian left took a long time to understand this fact. Even though, they understand, it could not come out openly. It was very difficult as to say when these scholars took the account of Vivekananda. But this sincerely started in the late Nineties of the 20th century. It is not to argue that, Vivekananda was not represented by the left earlier, but the representation became more open and transparent. Earlier to this, there were many writing on Swami Vivekananda. D.D. Kosambi, D.P Chattopadhyaya while dealing with Indian history and philosophy touched upon Vivekananda's writing. But they could not far extend see the Marxist socialist ideas proposed by Vivekananda. Subsequently, Binoy K. Roy, A.B. Bardhan, Sitaram Yechury came to represent Vivekananda. However their idea was a response to the saffronisation and narrow use of Vivekananda. This response was a product of post Babri Masjid demolition scenario, when the legendary Swami was used as a justification for the cause of propagating soft Hindutva. However, Binoy Roy point out that, freedom movement in India carries the legacy of swami Vivekananda. Terming him as the revolutionary of 20th century, he enunciates the progressive inheritance of Swami Vivekananda. He cites the exemplary call of Swami to fight for the enlightenment of the youth, downtrodden dumb millions. For Roy, Vivekananda highlights the privileges of the upper class and tried to give toiler their due share in the national wealth. His clarion call for the abolition of untouchability is the hall mark of his mission. The writer again points out the view of Vivekananda on material world which means laws. And laws according to Vivekananda

⁴² See for detail, *Swami Vivekananda: studies in Soviet Union*, Translated from Russian by Harish C Gupta, Ramakrishna Mission I institute of Culture, Calcutta, Year not given.

⁴³ V. Brodov, *Indian philosophy at modern times*, Progress publishers, Moscow, 1984

were slavery. Thus body a material being subordinate to soul. Soul is spiritual and its goal is to seek freedom and liberation. So for Vivekananda the concept of god emanates from the concept of freedom of soul.⁴⁴ Again Roy ascertains that, vivekananda teaches the philosophy of oneness. For vivekananda, as like science, all religion, philosophy should be guided by the principle of oneness⁴⁵. For Vivekananda neither mind supersedes the matter or vice versa. Rather something beyond mind and body that brings freedom. Both mind and matter is bound by the laws of environment and causality and striving for the beyond always leads to the highest, absolute, perfect and unchanging. ⁴⁶ The interpretation as above really gives new dimension to philosophy. Like Roy, Bardhan and Yechury emphasis on the progressive value of Vivekananda. But the difference is that, they put it as an argument form. As stated earlier, these scholars try to rescue Vivekananda from Hindutva.

Needless to say, there were controversies among intellectuals in 1990's regarding the nature of appropriation of Swami Vivekananda. This confrontation was direct, lenient, and large as both communists, secularists, hindutva brigades tries to claim their stake at Vivekananda. Some even question the credibility of left, when and why they turn in to Hinduism. For them, the communist movement's intellectual history on India, Indian nation and Hinduism is pitiable. They astonish about the turn of left towards Vivekananda, as the later always see Vivekananda as a path finder of Hindu nationalism even calling him a "Pakhandi.". it even accuse the left front government of revoking the chapters on Vivekananda when came to power⁴⁷. However, these allegations are to be proved carefully, keeping the history, politics, ideology and philosophy of left in to account. This was not the end of the debate, rather for Bardhan and Yechury; there is nothing in the works of Vivekananda from which Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh could draw comfort. It also said that, Vivekananda's idea of tolerance and acceptance as the main weapon to challenge communalism. Digging at the appropriation of Vivekananda by BJP, Bardhan says that the pride of Hinduism by Vivekananda to be seen in a context

⁴⁴ Binoy K Roy, *socio political Views of Vivekananda*, peoples publishing House, New Delhi, 2008, pp 1-24

⁴⁵ Ibid, page 54

⁴⁶ Ibid, p- 63

⁴⁷ Dinanath Mishra, 'Looking at Vivekananda', *OBP*, February 5, 1993

of western influence in India after the 1857 war of independence.⁴⁸ Again responding to Arun Sourie, who called Vivekananda as the new Darling of communists and secularists, Bardhan proves the secular credential of Vivekananda. He views that, there is a sheer conspiracy to represent Vivekananda as Muslim Bailer, a Crusader against Islam. Bardhan points out that Vivekananda was not anti Muslim rather he talks about the conjunction of two great cultures, Islam and Hinduism. Further Bardhan ensured Vivekananda as progressive, secular, humanist, messiah of poor and inspirer of youth⁴⁹. He concludes in saying that, there are enough food and ammunitions in Vivekananda's work that it can satisfy all those who are searching for India's socio, cultural and spiritual development. Let no one should appropriate him for one self, he says. He reminded Sourie, of the writers from left who has contributed a lot the culture and heritage of India⁵⁰.

Beside this, scholars like V.K.R.V Rao and R.K Das Gupta traces on the point of "Vedantic Socialism" of Vivekananda. For the above two scholars, it should not be concluded that Vivekananda propagated Vedantic Socialism as separate entity. But Vivekananda certainly says, I am a socialist because half of bread is better than no bread. On the other hand, his idea of Vedanta was monist, non discriminatory and all pervading. Vedanta never teaches human being to follow any such rituals and dogmas, by which god will be happy. Rather it is a link between soul and super soul, merging our own self to the absolute, unchanging and infinite Brahma. For Vedantist, all are equal and god lives every where. The nirguna part of Vedanta talks about nirliptata (non attachment but a complete devotion to the supreme) and see every body as the part and parcel of the world and the embodiment of Brahma. Once we relies that, every one seems to us a pure soul and the embodiment of supreme, than our identity on the ground of caste, class, religion, sex, colour, creed hardly matters. He\she sees a Brahmanmaya (Brahma all around) world never falling in the narrow margin of discrimination. This egalitarian tendency of

⁴⁸ 'CPM against the Debate on Hindu Ethos', *Hindustan Times*, 19 January 1999

⁴⁹ Roy Bhaskar, 'Left Turns to Vivekananda', *Times of India*, 31st March 2003 p-16

⁵⁰ A. B Bardhan, "A Rejoinder, of Sourie and Vivekananda", *Sunday*, 28th march- 3rd April 1993 pp- 71-74

Vedanta is more fascinating both for philosophy and for the philosophy of life.⁵¹ (Emphasis Added). However Das Gupta and Rao see Vedanta as a living component of life. For them, neither Badarayana nor Prastanatraya mentioned that world is a mere illusion. It rather nobly and heroically link people with other. Vedanta's positive ideas possess the socialist model of love, equality, freedom, tolerance, respect and acceptance. Thus there is a perfect combination between the two in Vivekananda's writing, which can be called "Vedantic Socialism"⁵². The above discussions make it clear that, Vivekananda has also made an impact over the left for his views. These representations of Vivekananda by the left, has generated much academic interest for Vivekananda Scholars. However, it would be difficult to say which representation is authentic among these multiple artifacts. As of now, it can be said that, all representation of Vivekananda has some substance and need to be tested further.

Vivekananda in Vernacular Literature: a case of Oriya Literature

However, Vivekananda's representation does not single handedly lies in the main stream literature like English or Hindi, but many regional languages also try to capture this. Here I would like to mention few of them from Oriya literature, which I have access. Needless to say that, Vivekananda was not a second Vivekananda in Oriya literature but the point is that we often see many exaggeration and paradoxes in these representations. Moreover it is also suffered by factual mistakes. This happens when we think some one beyond human being. The projection here lies in the single fact to represent Vivekananda as "Swami". There is no problem in projecting the hero as Swami- as the world know him in this name but the problem is that it often only deals with the persona of Vivekananda and not his works.

Vivekananda is often represented as the inspiring wheel of the youth. He died barely at the age of 39. In India, in his memory January 14th is observed as the national youth day. But the question arises, are not we over representing the personality of Vivekananda. An

⁵¹ However this observation is personally mine, neither Rao nor Dasgupta is responsible for this. .

⁵² V.K.R.V Rao, *Swami Vivekananda: the prophet of Vedantic Socialism*", New Delhi, 1979 p 248 also see R.K Das Gupta's *Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Socialism*, published by Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1995

Oriya writer writes, Vivekananda had a sharp memory power, whatever he reads once that remains as the permanent imprint on his mind. Vivekananda once asked Sarat Chandra Chakravarty to ask any thing from Britanica Encyclopedia. When asked some questions, Vivekananda gave the answers. The writer hence concludes that, this type of memory can not be possible for an ordinary human being and for Vivekananda; he never read any treatise twice in his life⁵³. This over representation or misrepresentation is not ends here. Even some view Vivekananda was an embodiment of Lord Shiva. To prove this substance, a childhood story of Vivekananda has been narrated. Where Vivekananda was encountered with a snake and could not noticed as he was in deep yogic exercise. Often it is said that, Vivekananda roars chanting Shivoam, Shivoam all the time. When in yoga a snake came to his room, gradually reached to Vivekananda's head, curled it and suddenly disappears.⁵⁴ Despite this, Even Vivekananda is said to have ate the vomiting of Sri Ramakrishna. Once Ramakrishna was not feeling well and was vomiting a lot Vivekananda was seating on the bed side of his Guru. When Ramakrishna called for a pot, where he cam vomit, it became late and Ramakrishna vomited. Vivekananda sitting aside accept all the vomiting in his hand and ate it with great pleasure seeming it as nectar. How ever the vomiting episode is termed as the devotion of a disciple towards his master⁵⁵ however, many other biographers also do the same mistakes while dealing with life and philosophy of Vivekananda. Even an Oriya writer views that, Vivekananda only knew himself after he visited Amaranth. Swami had a direct encounter with Lord Shiva, where the former asked the later to die soon but the later give him the boon to die at his own wish. For the writer, Vivekananda could have died in the temple only but due to Lord, he was saved. From here he got to know that that, he was the embodiment of Shiva, the manifestation of Immortality⁵⁶. Sarat Chandra Mohanty terms Vivekananda as "Chhatrapati"- the title given to Shivaji. For mohanty, Vivekananda made us known to the world. He was the first ambassador of India to the West. He compares the return of

⁵³ Apurba Ranjan Roy, '*Swami Vivekananda*' (in Oriya), Friend publications, Cuttack, 2003 pp 21-33

⁵⁴ Daitari Mahapatra, *Bharatara Surya: Swami Vivekananda* (IN Oriya), Surya Narayan Book Store, Cuttack- 2007 p-3

⁵⁵ Ibid, page no-19

⁵⁶ Manoj Kumar Mahapatra, *Bedrail Sannyasi, Swami Vivekananda Jibani o Darsana*"(In Oriya), New Age Publication, Cuttack, 2008 pp-455-464

Vivekananda from America as like, “Bahuda Bijaya⁵⁷.” For mohanty, it was a victory of Indian people, Indian Spiritualism, culture, religion and ethos of India⁵⁸. The representations of Vivekananda given above from Oriya Literature are to make a point that, even regional languages represent Vivekananda. However, these representations are to be verified by standard judgment with reason and rationality. What is refuted in the above representations is the personified representation of Vivekananda, hardly encapsulate academic pursuit. Rather philosophy of Vivekananda should take over the personality of him. Moreover, what is to be admired here is the potentials of regional languages, which at least try to capture the picture of Vivekananda’s life and philosophy. Nevertheless, Vivekananda Scholars of Oriya Literature should not be written off from main stream scholars, as there views also carries a deep meaning, which some time misses in English or Hindi.

It is not at all surprising to believe that, Vivekananda has seen as a man who only strives for his own gain. Prather Dixit stipulates it very clearly in her article. For her, Vivekananda had a personal cause and reason in doing all the things he deed. For Dixit, Vivekananda’s popularization of Vedanta philosophy was not unique event in the religious history of Hindus. In this, he had greater predecessor like Gorakhnath, Gyaneswara and many more saints. Vivekananda’s Vedanta, that’s why projected for national regeneration, where as earlier saints were passed in India’s the medieval past. There idea of Vedanta can be used both for regeneration and salvation. The interesting point the scholar makes is that, she rejects and challenge the existing representation of Swami Vivekananda as saint, patriot, and prophet or as radical Hindu thinker. Rather, he was an influence of modern India, nationalism and politics. For her, the success of Vivekananda in America was strictly personal in character. Challenging historians, who claim Vivekananda’s visit to America as the victory of Hinduism over other religion vis-à-vis East over the West, she says, the sole aim of Vivekananda was to propagate fashionable religion. Even for the author, Vivekananda’s trip does not revolutionaries world opinion towards Hinduism or Hindu nation. The view even goes further, when

⁵⁷ After Staying ten days at his Aunt’s house, Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhdra returns to own temple. The unique event of returning is called Bahuda Bijaya.

⁵⁸ Sarat Kumar Mohanty, *Chhatrapati Vivekananda*, Agraduta Publication, Cuttack, 2008

Dixit argues that, Vivekananda fall in the prey of European nationalists. Who always put a shallow praise for British; in this case one hardly finds the fragrance of nationalism or anti British formulation. Vivekananda for the author called himself a Karma yogi but in reality he was an exponent of political inaction. He always kept himself and other away of politics⁵⁹. The primary argument made here is that, vivekananda should be seen as a common man, who has many contradictions philosophically and personally. The social and political dimension of Vivekananda is rather common, as it is common for a common man. Necessarily, we should not think all his life and works has some reference for India and Indian nation.

Some other interpretations, however shows the problem in philosophic articulation of Vivekananda. According to Anantananda Ramabachan, Vivekananda was the first philosopher to challenge the scriptures and re interpret Vedas. Unlike Shankar, Vivekananda reject srutis and the super imposition of authority of scriptures. Vivekananda gave a enlighten critique to achieve Brahman through texts, rather for him personal experience like Anubhava and Samadhi can supersede over srutis. By this, Vivekananda gave a new philosophical position, rejecting scripture imposing experience to reach Brahman. Though in this case, Vivekananda superimpose experience over scriptures still he could not reconcile all four Yogas properly. In relation to the attainment of Moksha, reason enjoys a lower esteem in Vivekananda. He could not place Jyanayoga properly to be medium of attainment of moskha. The fundamental difference between Shankara and Vivekananda is that, the earlier believes knowledge occurs in the mind and mediated through reason where as for the later; knowledge is not gained by mediation but by transcendence. Reason transcending experience can reach to the level of Brahmgyana. So for Vivekananda Gyana comes in a later stage and not mediated by reason.⁶⁰ While criticizing the place of reason in the quest of moksha in gyanayoga, the author again appreciate him for the use of science in attaining Moksha. The use of science can be seen from the use of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, which Vivekananda declared

⁵⁹ See for an illuminating discussion, Prabha Dixit, 'Political and Social Dimension of Vivekananda's Ideology', *The Indian Economic and History Review*, July-Sept 1975, No-3 VOL-XII

⁶⁰ Anantananda Rambachan, 'The place of Reason in the Quest of Moksha: Problem in Vivekananda's Conceptualization of Gyanayoga', *Religious Studies*, Vol.23, No-2, June-1987 pp-279-88

as the science in the world. He took Samadhi as the highest source of knowledge. It is too a highest level of mental activity. It is again a method of concentration, where there is the death of mind and absence of duality. Here Vivekananda used science and attainment of Moksha as an analogous way. And the credit goes to him for this outstanding effort⁶¹.

It is nevertheless interesting that, Vivekananda is not only seen as a philosopher or as a patriot but as a propagator of the idea of a genuine Indian state. Raghuramraju points out it very strikingly. Showing the internal debates of Indian philosophy, he attracts our attention about the dialogic affluence of Indian philosophy as modern and pre modern, India vs. Western. For him, the debates within our own could not able to configure and made practical to build the society. The acknowledgement of this debate can put forward new possibilities hence by rejecting some of the contradiction. In this context the author discuss the debate of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. Showing the commonalities between the two, the author says that both were the critique of modernity. Though Vivekananda had some fascination towards western modernity in his earlier part of life, still he denounces it later. Despite the commonality even on the ground of nationalism and patriotism, the both had an island of differences.

Rejecting the ordering of Partha chetterjee as Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru and Tapan Raychaudhary's Bhudev, Bhankim, Vivekananda, Raghuramraju only accepts Vivekananda and Gandhi as two paradigms. Putting Bankim above Vivekananda, due to his national and international appeal to transcend the parochial bond. The author named the idea of state as a part of Swami Paradigm because, he is the only intellectual minds of 19th century India with qualified formulated and distinguished the contrasted west from India. He by doing this gave systematic interpretations of west, tradition, modernity and India. The broad features of Swami Paradigm can be traced below-

1. Celebration of India's Spiritual Past
2. Admission of India's poverty and material backwardness.
3. Punctuation of India's West's material progress.
4. Giving India's spiritualism to the west

⁶¹ Anantananda Rambachan, 'Swami Vivekananda's Use of Science as an analogy for attainment of Moksha', *Philosophy East and West*, Vol-40, No-3, July-1990 pp 331- 342

These four progressive components how far constitute the core of Vivekananda's idea. Showing this the author says, Vivekananda for his nationalistic feeling and the articulation of the idea of nation state represents the state paradigm. Where as Gandhi being a part of civil society paradigm. The debate between the two thus produces two streams of thought, the earlier representing State and the later civil society⁶².

The above discussions show that the disagreement on the representation of Vivekananda has produced confusion. The lack of a holistic approach to analyze Vivekananda has created many academic challenges. These troubles are more serious and thought provoking, which enable scholars to do more academic exercise on Vivekananda. Understanding of Vivekananda, without being in any camp or putting the same in any camp, can be a novel exercise for academics and scholars. Let it be good for the scholars, when a strong and homogenous representation of Vivekananda takes over a fragile and heterogeneous Vivekananda.

The next chapter will discuss Hindutva's representation of Vivekananda.

⁶² See for detail A Raghuramraju, *Debates in Indian Philosophy: Classical, colonial and Contemporary*, Oxford University press, New Delhi, 2006, pp 29-65s

CHAPTER-2

Hindutva's Representation of Swami Vivekananda

Hindutva, which originated as a form of political ideology in the early 20th century has entered into various walks of life. Hindutva is not an inherited legacy an imaginary construction. This is imaginary due to the attachment to “Hinduness” and “Hindu Rastra”. Sometime the idea of “other” pronounced by Hindutva makes it more exclusive in a plural and composite society like India. However, these constructions are legitimized, shaped and polished, bringing out of the name of many figures. Needless to say, apart from Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Dayananda and many other scholarly symbols are used by the Hindutva to prove the genealogy of Hindutva in the contemporary times. But Swami Vivekananda, being a major figure of 19th century has become a scapegoat for the scholarly vigor of Hindutva. On contrary to this, he propagated a form of Religion, which was Hinduism's Universal appeal of tolerance and acceptance. The progressive ideas of Swami discussed in the Chapter-1 includes his Vedantic ideals are the living example of this. Needless to say, Hindutva was a non-existent political ideology at that time for India, Hinduism and for Vivekananda. Thus, the relationship between the two is estranged to each other. Despite the fact, Hindutva looks Vivekananda as a Hindu nationalist figure. The aim of the chapter is to show how Hindutva, which represents a peculiar shift of ideology from time to time both in guise and disguise, represents Vivekananda. What are the forms, substance and the consequences of this representation? This chapter makes an attempt to examine this representation critically.

Vivekananda in Hindutva Literature

There are many ways in which Vivekananda has been seen by the Hindutva School. This is difficult to trace all the literature of Hindutva but it surely demands the discussion of some major literature of and its representation of Vivekananda. Arun Sourie puts this view point very clearly. For him, Vivekananda was pro-Hindu and anti Muslim. He quotes Vivekananda, who said that, the man that is going out of Hindu pale should be taken back and the man who does it to be treated more than enemy. The central promise

of Vivekananda, according to Sourie, was that India's essence lays in religion. Sourie's intellectual articulation does not stop here but he shows the view of Vivekananda towards Prophet Mohammed, which for him was negative and an untrained yogi for him. Sourie also portrays that Vivekananda rejects the holy Quran and Bible. The universal appeal of brotherhood of Swami is for believers of religion to unite them and not to non believers, writes Sourie¹. Other writings on Hindutva also show the negative opinions of Vivekananda towards Islam². Thus, Hindutva seeks the political and cultural justifications are sought in the name of Vivekananda.

Another major strategy of the Hindutva literature is the manipulation of Hagiographic discourse. This is through the life, narratives and small stories on Vivekananda. The politics of biography can be a hall mark of Hindutva's appropriation of Vivekananda. Separate life stories are being written to paint Vivekananda differently. The highlights made here are the same as in Oriya literature, portraying Swami a divine and extraordinary man who performs many functions which is beyond human capacity³. RSS mouth piece "Organiser" has many things to say about Vivekananda in this regard. It was publishing a column called "To the Youth", written in the pseudo name called "By One of Them". It narrates different stories on Vivekananda to inspire and mould the ideology of the youth. As are, story proceeds, when Vivekananda was on his voyage to America a European laughed at him and aired some derogatory comment on India. Swami raised his objection to him. To conclude the story, Organiser Writes:

"Insolence and rudeness can be tolerated only to a limit beyond which it is stemly put down. If Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual giant he was not physically week and what greater positions can one expect a strong, powerful and healthy body. With the strong body goes a strong mind⁴.

¹ Arun Sourie, 'Myths about Swami', *The Sunday*, 31 January – 7 February, 1993

² Kanayalal M Talreja, *Pseudo Secularism in India*, Rastriya Chetana Prakashan, Mumbai, 1996(see chapter five entitled " Vivekananda's opinion about Islam")

³ See Rana Pratap Singh, '*Swami Vivekananda: Prerak Aur Jeevan Prasanga*'(Vol-1 and 2), Lokhit Prakasan, Sanskriti Bhavan , Lucknow also see Shiv Kumar Goel, '*Swami Vivekananda*', Hindi Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, 2007

⁴ *Organiser*, 10th July 1947, page 11

Wooing youth by stories and fables related to Vivekananda, is a major concern of Hindutva. These stories as usual preach the ideology of Hindutva. In the name of “Tarun Bodha Kathaenyen” it inflicts its own thinking in youth’s mind. The stories here do not relate itself either to Vedanta or to genuine Hinduism, but spread the inherent ideology through stories⁵. This is the first step to hijack the independency, creativity and objectivity of child. False reading of history and selective story telling in this way lay the foundation for a communal mindset.⁶

It also describes Vivekananda as a messenger of hope, the embodiment of fearlessness. Further declaring Vivekananda as the boon of motherland and believes that he still lives there to inspire the generations to come. . Thus saying these four connotations are attributed to Vivekananda⁷:

- Vivekananda was fond of Exercise.
- He was a warrior soul.
- His life was an ascetic construction.
- Service to motherland and manhood.

Why are the youths Hindutva’s major targets? What benefit can Hindutva draw from them? A physically fit body can protect both own self and Hindu Rastra. Again the physical strength comes to forefront where Vivekananda’s saying of “play football and reach to heaven” was invoked⁸. This above narration makes it some how clear that, Vivekananda is invoked, to inspire the youth to possess physical strength and throw weakness. These in the later days are used as a universal Mantra, to fight against the enemy defending oneself and the motherland.

Despite this, Vivekananda even was listed as a cultural nationalist in Hindutva literature. It is because religion has been central to his project of nationalism. As he portrays the idealized and virtuous aspects of Hinduism so it attracts many people at one side. This narration and centrality to religion in the national life of India makes him a true cultural

⁵ Bireswar Dwivedi, Omkar Bhabhe, Dr Ram Kumar (Eds), ‘*Tarun Bodhkathaeyen*’ (in Hindi), Lokhit Prakasan, 2008, Lucknow.

⁶ J Kuruvachira, *Politicization of Hindu Religion in the Post Modern India*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2008 p 150

⁷ Jagdish Chandra Khanna, ‘The Dawn Over India: Vivekananda’, *Organiser*, 24th July 1947, p-6

⁸ ‘To the Youth’, By One of Them, *Organiser*, 21st August 1947, p11

nationalist. This nationalism according to the school's view is unique. This further escalates to the upbringing of an idea which seeks that, in philosophy and religion, India is decided to be the best and Supreme. And hindutva believes that Swami Vivekananda has showed and the world admitted it⁹. Vivekananda always said India is a blessed land and a place of national heroes. But in spite of this, we have failed to produce a national life. He awakens us about the consequences of the lack of national life and unity. For the former, some of the temples of southern India and Somnath will give you volumes of wisdom. A nation that has no past has not future also¹⁰. Again on the context of nationality, Hindutva prefers to quote Vivekananda. When every one was laughing at Vivekananda calling him Fakir, Vivekananda was calm. He says when our monks were practicing the arch of religion you were a small children then. For him, he was proud of his land and believed that "Bharatiya Asmita" is not less then any other country's Asmita¹¹. Even some argues that this culture and national life comes into our domain because Vivekananda used to justify the Hindu way of life. One should follow the Hindu way of life because India is spiritual first than anything else. Putting the idea of nationalism of Vivekananda, it is argued the Congress party failed to acknowledge Bharatiya culture¹².

This is quite evident from the above that the idea of Vivekananda is used sometime to counter the opponents by Hindutva. A political Vivekananda comes into fore front when we use him to annihilate "the other". This politics of appropriation further leads to commits the fallacy of ignoring the philosophic strength of a philosopher. Even to spread this national culture and to overcome the mighty forces of wicked ness, bigotry, and arrogance that prevent in widening of Sanatana Dharma, we must acquire strength. Here it is a question, what does really meant by "over coming mighty forces" and the meaning of "Sanatana Dharma" to Hindutva literature? So for Hindutva, a glorious Bharat¹³, an aggressive Hinduism, national life of the above kind and the question of the other is

⁹ 'To the Youth', By One of Them, *Organiser*, 31st July 1947, p-9

¹⁰ S Manohar, 'Essentials of Our National Life', *Organiser*, September 25, p 5

¹¹ Shyamalal, 'True Democracy is yet to come', *Organiser*, November 16 1949, p 6

¹² A Swami From South, Swami Ramakrishna and National Life, *Organiser*, December 28, 1949, p 3

¹³ Swami Vivekananda, *Organiser*, 26 January 1951, p 3

dreamed by Vivekananda. This shows Vivekananda gave a rising call for the construction of a Hindu Nation. It is because, Vivekananda talked about a regenerated Bharat. This Bharat is Hindu in nature and content with Hindu ness in its form and substance. In his theorization a Hindu nation can be clearly carved out, the school argues. It further enhances that the idea Vivekananda urge for is “Kshatiya Biryā and Brahma Teja” by which means the combination of physical strength and mental vigor.

The idea of “Karma Yoga” has been a major focus of Hindutva where the main protagonist is Vivekananda. This Karma Yoga for Hindutva is necessarily a stepping stone to give a pragmatic shape to their ideology, to be more action oriented. It ordains the legacy of practical political action from Vivekananda in the name of Karma Yoga. However, the original Karma Yoga theory is different from Hindutva’s idea of Karma Yoga. This all made the hindutva to come to conclusion that Vivekananda gave a rousing call to Hindu Nation¹⁴. It is quite amorphous that Hindutva hardly takes a look into the Jyana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga of Vivekananda. Beside this, Hindutva believes that Vivekananda encountered other religions and proved the superiority of Hinduism. This is not a dialogue for the Hindutva but a rejection of the running trends of major religions, esp. Christianity. In the Hindu Christian dialogue, Vivekananda reestablish the superior tenets of Hinduism over other¹⁵. This articulation of Vivekananda even goes further, where the head of the RSS says; Vivekananda and Napoleon warned the world about China. The fear of china is rather to Hindutva than that to Vivekananda and the later is a mere symbol to justify the argument¹⁶. Whereas in so other places again Golwalkar points out,

“If you want to know India, know and understand Vivekananda. The political freedom we are enjoying today was the immediate roots of cultural renaissance heralded by the Swami.”¹⁷ One of the striking features the Sarasanghachalak (chief of RSS hierarchy) of RSS thinks of Vivekananda is that, he was the embodiment of strength and weakness for him was a sin. The genealogy of Guru Tradition of Bharat is enriched by Vivekananda.

¹⁴ Eknath Ranade(Compiled), ‘*Swami Vivekananda’s Rousing call to Hindu Nation*’, Vivekananda Prakasan Trust, Chennai, 2005 pp 3-8

¹⁵ Sitaram Goel, ‘*History of Hindu Christian Encounter*’, Voice of India, New Delhi, pp-77- 106

¹⁶ Sri Guruji, *Organiser*, 12 Nov, 1962 p 8

¹⁷ ‘Guruji Calls it’, *Organiser*, 21st January 1963

He as a Guru propagated many novel ideas. Purity, celibacy, learning Sanskrit etc were the main points, Golwalkar believed. For Golwalkar, Swami's speeches and writing refers frequently to Hindu Nation¹⁸. To supplement, before coming to Hedgewar's fold, Golwalkar was a part of Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Perhaps, this back round helped Golwalkar in comparison to other predecessor and successor, helped him to understand Vivekananda in a different perspective.

The basic premises in which Hindutva operates and functions is a mindset constructed and constituted over a period of time. However, this mindset is so widespread in the recent times that, it is able to produce many consequences in relation to various ways of life. This mindset is more or less a framework, an imaginary figment. And surprisingly, Vivekananda, who is a philosopher and reformer of 19th Century India, are forcibly drawn in to this mindset or this constructed imaginary framework. Needless to say, the celebration of Vision-2000 by Hindutva in Washington to commemorate Vivekananda's centenary of parliament of religion speech of 1893 is a classic example of that. This indeed argues that GV-2000 aimed at conceiving the ideal of Swami Vivekananda and projecting it's relevance in contemporary American society¹⁹. Surprisingly, the Hindu thought of Vivekananda is used in this conference to achieve the hindutva ideal. These direct lenient of Vivekananda by Hindutva is clear bench mark of the politics of appropriation of the former by the later. However, respecting Swami Vivekananda and celebrating the centenary of his speech does not necessarily mean to possess a copy right of the same.

Hindutva's Representation of Vivekananda: Ideology and Practice

Hindutva's appropriation of Vivekananda does not confine itself to only some aspects. It rather deliberately enhances and tries to portray Swami Vivekananda as the chief exponent of Hindutva. It seems, as if Hedgewar and Golwalkar were the successor of the legacy founded by Vivekananda. However, this ideology forgets that, Vivekananda's far reaching contribution to all facets of life viz. social, political, economic, cultural and

¹⁸ 'Sri Guruji's Address on the Occasion of Vivekananda's Centenary Celebration, 'Strength and Service are the twin notion of Vivekananda's life', *Organiser*, 11th February 1963, p 4 and 15

¹⁹ See the Vision 2000 Interview with Ashok Singhal in [www. Groups google.com/soc.culture.indian/browse_thread](http://www.Groups.google.com/soc.culture.indian/browse_thread)

spiritual stands all the time high than Doctorji or Guruji of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. . It can be well recorded that, the RSS and its affiliates tries to take credit the name of the great legendary. Of course, it can not be neglected that it also owes some Hindu vote by it. This appropriation of Vivekananda by fragments really looses the sanctity of Vivekananda as a whole. So, a holistic Vivekananda lost its charm by the selective appropriation of Hindutva and its allies. It further derogates the Vivekananda's ideas. Instead of learning some good lesson from Vivekananda, the hindutva forces tries to degenerate Vivekananda. The VHP (the religious wing of RSS) use him to sensitize the Hindu, ABVP (Student wings of RSS) use him to sensitize the students. It is surprise to note that, the Bajrang Dal looks after the training of young boys calls itself in different names. In west Bengal is called Vivekananda Bahini. This Hindutva forces in various ways appropriates Vivekananda whichever way feel suitable to them. It takes the idea of muscularity or manliness of Swami as the gospel. It has adopted the famous statement of Swamiji, "Strength is power, and weakness is Death" as a core mantra. For example how the idea of masculinity/strength are derived from Vivekananda for the spread the saffron flags. A website called "Hindutva-smriti.org" elaborate that, Vivekananda was a major exponent of strength. It also derives following words of Vivekananda to give the literary justification to strength practiced and propagated by Hindutva. Those are:

"All power is within you; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that; do not believe that you are weak; do not believe that you are half-crazy lunatics, as most of us believe now-a-days. You can do anything and everything, without even the guidance of any one. Strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life; strength, it says, strength, O man, be not weak. ~ Everything that can weaken us as a race we have had for the last thousand years. It seems as if during that period the national life had this one end in view, viz., how to make us weaker and weaker, till we have become real earthworms crawling at the feet of every one who dares to put his foot on us. Weakness is the one cause of suffering"²⁰.

This manifestation of strength subsequently becomes the mantra for RSS. Thus by practicing all sorts of Kusti, Kasrat and lathi play in Akhdas and Sakhas, to make them

²⁰ Cited from www.hindutvasmriti.org accessed on 24th February 2009

physically fit²¹. This indeed converts Swami Vivekananda only as an angry and arrogant Hindu swami, who only talked about masculinity. This further leads to the distortion of the image of Swami Vivekananda. In the name of man making and nation building the symbolic adoption of Swami Vivekananda by Hindutva can be seen from the literature, Web Site and of day to day activity of the same. However, these adoptions are so symbolic that, it is hard to dismantle the common perception of Vivekananda being a part of Hindutva.

However, this is not the point where Hindutva stops and quit Vivekananda but this unbreakable bond goes further as the Swami was used in various ways by the same. It is evident that, the “Janadesh Jatra” of Sri L.K Advani against the Religion Bill started in 1st September 1993, the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda’s Chicago Speech. Internalizing Vivekananda thus has turned into the major part of Hindutva’s legacy in the day to day life. The symbolic presence of Vivekananda either as an ideologue or as a path finder or as a true inspirer of Hindutva can be clearly seen in the chronicles of Hindutva. These symbolic invocations of Vivekananda, makes him a part and parcel of Parivar Legacy, as if one respectable and elderly figure of Parivar. To give an example, Golwalkar died in 1973. Sri L.K Advani, then as the president of Jan Sangh paid a rich tribute to the late RSS leader in tears stating that Golwalkar was the Swami Vivekananda of modern times that he was dedicated to the creation of greater India²².

The literature published by Hindutva and Hindutva scholar always tries to show a unanimous approach to Vivekananda. For them Vivekananda was a strong nationalist, who believed Bhatata as “Punya Bhumi”. This idea of Punya Bhumi is laid down by Vivekananda at his Colombo address 1997. Unfortunately, this has become a treatise for Hindutva. For the votaries of Hindutva geographical and spiritual “Indian Ethos” truly reestablished by Vivekananda. On other hand, in the recent times, the Hindutva School gives much trace to the personality cult of Vivekananda than that of his intellectual discourse. It is hard to believe that Vivekananda’s dress, energy, fiery speech, blooming

²¹ See Prarlary Kanungo, ‘RSS Tryst with Politics: from Hedgewar to Sudarshan’, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 2002 pp 44-45

²² See C.P Bhisikar, ‘Guruji the pioneer of New Era’, 1999. Bangalore

face, young sannyasi's sacrifice, Brahmacharya and Hindu spirit etc become the part of easy appropriation. This is to project Vivekananda as the Savior of Hindus and an acclaimed National Ideal.

Beside this Hindutva by force justify the representation of Vivekananda portraying him in its own model. This representation takes a multiple guise. Sometime vivekananda is used symbolically, strategically and hermeneutically. In this way hindutva also justify the irrational in the name of Vivekananda.

Hindutva's Representation of Vivekananda: A Critique

The entry of Hindutva into Vivekananda's domain gave the Hindutva a philosophic strength. And through that, the legitimacy of the ideology is sought. Rightly or wrongly, there are some commonality between Hindutva and Vivekananda. which shows the interrogation of Vivekananda as Hindu Nationalist.

Scholar's points out that, Vivekananda's idea gave rise to idea of Hindutva. There are many such components which are taken out by Hindutva from Vivekananda. For the scholars, Vivekananda and Hindutva are not alien to each other, but they have a formidable bond. This unbreakable bond makes Vivekananda a soft votary of hindutva and gives a space to hindutva to appropriate. Jyotirmaya Sharma argues this very strikingly, showing the complexity in Vivekananda's writing, Sharma points out that Vivekananda was not only a model of soft Hindutva but can be appropriated as a propagated of a strong, virile, militant, Hindu nation.²³ Vivekananda's restatement of Hinduism as Vedantic, keeping it away from Tantric, Puranic Bhakti and conservative sect, makes his intention clear. His concern becomes clearer in his address at Parliament of Religion. He spoke of three core concerns which are Hindu identity, Hindu Nationalism and equal dialogue between different faiths. This restatement of Hinduism

²³ See Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Hindutva: Exploration of the idea of Hindu Nationalism in India*, Penguin Viking, New Delhi, 2003, p -184

further results in assertions Hinduism as mother of all religion, a tool for acceptance and tolerance, which rejects sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism. So for Vivekananda, Hinduism is not a dogma, doctrine, talk etc but a process or being and becoming, laying the philosophic intervention of Hinduism, Vivekananda lays the trace on soul and god, thrashing the prophetic tradition. He says, Hindu's don't have any prophet, all prophetic religion for him is individual centric and hence create suspicion and humiliation.²⁴ Like that Vivekananda goes on to criticize Islam terribly alleging it as cruel, which struck against sin ideology and mock worship. He also said that Islam always make reason subservient to religion. According to him, Islam has build on the basis of narrow mildness. It prefer sword in one hand and Quran on the other hand. This is too bound to itself. Terming all these, Vivekananda believed that only Hinduism has reached that maturity of being evolved as World religion.²⁵ For Sharma, even, the attitude of Vivekananda towards Christianity Missionaries and Buddhists and Bhakta's were not good. This criticism of other Religions, to popularize and restate the superiority of Hinduism, later became a larger project of hindutva propoganda of Vivekananda. Vivekananda's idea of India is all pervading, gentle, generous, pure, calm, and spiritual – a Punya Bhumi. The Indian nation for Vivekananda was a Hindu nation, which Fails to look into the past. His idea of manliness is to protect the Hindu nation from attacks and engaging in political action.²⁶ So, for Sharma, there are many components which Vivekananda has uttered has later became the Bible for the votary of Hindutva.

Javeed Alam has pointed out this antimony of Hindutva and Vivekananda. He traces roots of the cultural foundation of Hindu nation. For him, the early nationalism though, particularly 19th century renaissance period was the time, where cultural foundation of nation was posed against the colonial ruler. This is to justify the spiritual superiority of India against “the other”. For Alam, Vivekananda is a front runner of this cultural counter offensive. But the problematic part is that, through this the politics of cultural common

²⁴ Ibid., p 186

²⁵ Ibid., pp 186-188

²⁶ Ibid pp 188-189

sense were created. For the author, the sense of the other, what now RSS, VHP whisper.²⁷ Thus Sharma and Alam, make same set or argument.

For Sujata Patel the binaries of the majority and minority and the psyche of Hindu majority phenomena started in 19th century India. For her, Sangathan, Seva and Gurus are responsible for this. Swami Vivekananda as perceived by Patel is one of the Chief proponents of this Hindu majoritarian ideal. According to the author, Vivekananda standardize the Hindu principles by excavating tradition and explicating a savarna reading of Hinduism. For Sujata Patel, it produced a new constituency creating a founder brain of majoritarian Hinduism. This institutional Hinduism was diverted for Veda and Seva. The idea of calling the swami the Mass Messiah has been rejected by the author, for her, Vivekananda was more interested in the Salvation of Sevakas, then that of masses. Because here Seva is performed by Sevakas not masses. Like colonial officials, Vivekananda used ideological sources to re construct a codified Hindu sort of principles, operated within the caste hierarchy and presented a Brahmanical upper caste male view of Hinduism. So for the author, the colonial modernity and a creation of Majoritarian Hindu View has an internal link.²⁸

The idea of Seva and Sangathan has been further traced by Gwilym Beckerlegge. He views that Ramakrishna Math and Mission inherited the idea on service from Vivekananda. Beckerlegge hopes that this idea on service might have twofold, one is, the symbol of Hindu tradition as legacy of service on the other the ideal of Ramakrishna Vivekananda.²⁹

Somewhere other, Beckerlegge points out that, the idea of Renunciation and activism of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh can comes from Vivekananda³⁰. He also points out that Vivekananda and Sangh Parivar has many convergent and divergent views on population, religion and national identity, Acknowledging the commonality and diversity between the

²⁷ See Javeed Alam, *India Living with Modernity*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1999, pp 103-127

²⁸ Sujata Patel, 'Beyond Binaries: Sociological Discourse of Religion', International Institute of Asian Studies, *IAS News Letter, Summer Essay*, Simla, 2007, 44-45

²⁹ Gwilym Beckerlegge, *Swami Vivekananda's legacy of Service: A Study of Ramakrishna Math and Mission*, Oxford, New Delhi, 2006

³⁰ Gwilym Beckerlegge, 'Iconographic Representations and Renunciation and Activism in the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 2004, 19: 1: pp - 47-66

two, Beckerlegge points out the appropriation of Vivekananda by RSS as a form of misappropriation. To prove this, the writer says that Vivekananda's goal is different from the goal of Hedge war's followers. Vivekananda's mission is not the same as earlier, although there might be some overlap. The use made by advocates of the Hindu right has constituted both misrepresentation and illicit appropriation when the symbolic power of Vivekananda has been invoked and deployed to suggest that their cause and his mission are compatible and mutually supportive.³¹

VIVEKANANANDA WAS NOT A PART OF HINDUTVA

Despite this, scholars argue that progressive ideas and revolutionary potentials of Vivekananda take precedent over the Hindutva. For them, Vivekananda's idea stands much respectable in the context in which he writes. Tapan Raychaudhary even argues whatever vivekananda draw is for the modernization of Hinduism and was very true in spirit. Thus it is very difficult for us to link him with Hindutva³². However, Amiya Sen echo's the same line rejecting the effective appropriation of Vivekananda by Hindu Rightist and Communal organizations. For Sen, Vivekananda's establishment of the superiority of Hinduism was not to prove the same but he was easy with the word Hindu. Which he believed, is an ill defined category and a cultural construct. Sen again argues that the muscular Hinduism is not the idea in which Vivekananda should be seen. Rather the citadel of this has been build earlier with the help of Bankim and Ram Mohan.³³ Even Sumit Sarkar makes another striking argument. Pointing out the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideal, he makes it clear that, there is a profound depth in this philosophy. Sarkar points out:

³¹ Gwilym Beckerlegge, 'Swami Vivekananda and Sangh Parivar: Convergent and Divergent View on Population, Religion and National Identity', *Post Colonial Studies*, 2006, 9:2, pp 121-135

³² Tapan Raychaudhary, 'Swami Vivekananda and the construction of Hinduism' in William Radice (Ed), *Swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism*, See the forward, Oxford, New Delhi 1998, p. 12.

³³ Amiya Sen, *Swami Vivekananda*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, pp 18 – 19

“Vivekananda the apostle of anti British nationalism today belongs essentially to the past: what has become ominously relevant is the other, closely related image of swami as one of the founder of 20th century hindutva, of a united muscular and aggressive Hinduism. He had no particular prejudices about Islam. But there is a little doubt that likes very much Hindu nationalist of his time, or later, the Bharat of Vivekananda was essentially Hindu. The closing appeal of fraternal embrace in “Bartaman Bharat” some how forgets to include Muslims. Much more important is the crucial role of Vivekananda in crystallizing a Hindu Identity that is able to play simultaneously on the twin register of catholicity and aggression: a pattern of that standard in the discourse of today’s RSS-VHP-BJP combine³⁴”.

There are many such writers, who see the polar difference between Vivekananda and Hindutva. Whatever commonality exists, it is rather a co-incident. Needless to say that, these arguments of scholars is of course a by product of acute appropriation of Vivekananda by Hindutva. It is not explicit or manifested all the time clearly, but it takes many guises, symbolically, hagiographically and hermeneutically. These all, however provide a foundation for Hindutva to establish the ideological base. Unfortunately Vivekananda becomes the prey in this politics of appropriation. The natures at many times are latent and strategic, which entrench the domain of Vivekananda’s philosophy with certain inherited objectives. Instead of objectifying Vivekananda, the use of the former for selfish objective is condemnable. The nature itself will make it clear, how emphatically hindutva embrace Vivekananda. What is the fundamental nature of this genesis need to discuss further for better understanding?

It is a debate over a period of time that whether Vivekananda influenced Hindutva or it is a by product of the politics of Hindutva. Overemphasis on any may produce dismay: but emphasis is a must. Needless to say, Vivekananda’s India range itself from nationalist struggle to anti imperial suit. It was a period of colonialism vis-à-vis transformation, a conjuncture of multiple situations. In this situation when the Swami thought of Hinduism’s strength, spirituality of India, glory to national life etc, then it was not identified as the exclusive thinking. It was aired as a Swami’s thinking or dream for

³⁴ Sumit Sarkar, ‘Kaliyuga, Chakri and Bhakti : Ramakrishna and His Times’, *EPW*, Vol.27, No.29, July 18 1992, p- 1561

Bharat. No body could have imagined that some decades after he will be handy to an ideology. The freedom of speech enjoyed by Vivekananda longing from Chicago Parliament of religion to his later days enjoyed a status of an independent evaluation ranging from polity, society, culture, economy, religion, nationalism and spirituality. Hindutva, which was a non existent political ideology of the time, took a dig later on Vivekananda to justify the ideological grounds. Despite the commonality of ideas between Hindutva and Vivekananda as exemplified by some scholars, it does not necessarily endorse a total mandate to the former to justify the later or take the edge on him. It would be a mistake to evaluate Vivekananda as Hindutva brigade, as the former transgress the later on many of his secular, humanitarian world views. The way Hindutva appropriates Vivekananda both selectively and strategically can be countered by the same discourse. Indeed Swami Vivekananda has many disagreements with Hindutva. And that disagreement tends to reach the conclusion that Vivekananda and Hindutva are two polar opposite world view. This will be clear when we will throw some light on this as how Vivekananda stands superior even unaffected despite the conspiracy of appropriation.

LIBERAL INHERITANCE OF RAMAKRISHNA IN VIVEKANANDA

Scholars owe the politicization of the colour saffron, its recent use, in India, as a sign of national pride, to the Hindu revivalist Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). We largely owe to him, too (more than we do to any other single person), the notion of ‘Hinduness.’ Vivekananda is a curious figure, and an exemplary one; his story is inflected with the conflicts of interest, the contradictions, of the emergence of Hinduism into modernity. Vivekananda’s life has many folds. But his life drastically changes after he met the Indian mystique Sri Ramakrishna. Needless to say that, Ramakrishna practiced all the religious rituals and viewed that one can reach god by any religion. So he formulated “Jat Mat Tat Pat”. This, then, was part of Vivekananda’s liberal inheritance; but it was an inheritance quite different from that of the liberal humanism that had come to exist in Bengal by this time, and which Vivekananda, as Narendranath Datta, would probably have subscribed to had he not met Ramakrishna. It was a middle-class humanism that decreed tolerance towards all faiths, regardless of whether or not you adhered to one yourself. Unconvincing to many, but still true, these appropriation of Hindutva hardly

subscribe to the inheritance of either Ramakrishna or Vivekananda. Doing the same, far-right or Hindutva have imposed a violent, if illegal, ban on imagined offences to the Hindu religion, and abused and harassed artists and writers for their supposed transgressions. This is not only a failure of secularism; it speaks to us of the imminent death of Ramakrishna's inheritance: leaving us unable to negotiate, any more, the different ways of seeing in a way that might create rather than destroy.

VIVEKANANDA AS PROPAGATOR OF INCLUSIVE HINDUISM

It can be enumerated that, we might think we see some of the lineaments of today's Hindutva in Vivekananda's revived faith; and, while it is hard to deny the lineage, it's important to distinguish between the two. Certainly, Vivekananda wanted Hinduism to stand on its own two feet, to become less inward-looking, and exhorted it to become a more 'manly' religion. Like other figures of the Bengal Renaissance, he welcomed Western rationalism, science, and materialism, and wanted Hinduism to enter into a transaction with these things. Hindutva continues that journey westward; but the West itself has become a different entity from what it was in the late 19th century. Vivekananda would not have foreseen a West that is synonymous, principally, with the benefits of the free market, which the twice-born Hindutva now rushes towards. Moreover, Ramakrishna, the rustic seer, was important to Vivekananda as the vernacular root of Hinduism; he couldn't have known that the religion he helped revive would venture so far into the world that it would become, in essence, a globalized urban faith, in Delhi and Bombay, London and New York, divorced from the vernacular experience that Ramakrishna represented. The followers of the post-modern Hindutva still ritually, and piously, celebrate Vivekananda, but, a hundred years after his death, no longer exit in conscience or discernment. The religious plurality and unity is the corner stone of Vivekananda's ideal where as Hindutva is far away from that ideal speculation. What is to be quoted here is the demolition of Muslim shrine more than four centuries and a half old, but the demolition of the liberal and humane India created by Kabir and Nanak, Rammohun Ray, Ramakrishna, Rabindranath, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo and many others who gave the world an impression of India as the finest ideal of human unity. It further insulates some other ideas related to Vivekananda as

social reformer. He was a critique of caste, untouchability and the evil practices of religion. He say whatever we are practicing to day in the name of religion is nothing but don't-touchism in the name of religion. These universal ideas are many in numbers in Vivekananda's writing which can be used as progressive elements for the betterment of society.

The question today is — what have we, inheritors of this ideal, done to restore that lost image? Swami Vivekananda made Ramakrishna's ideal of religious harmony the substance of his lectures in India and Europe. In his first address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago delivered on 11 September 1893, Vivekananda said: "We accept all religions as true." And in the peroration of this historic address Vivekananda said: "I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."³⁵

Actually Vivekananda was never happy with the word Hindu which is the key word in VD Savarkar's Hindutva, the bible of the Sangh Parivar. In his address at Jaffna in 1897 Vivekananda said: "The word Hindu, by which it is the fashion now to style ourselves, has lost all its meaning. I, therefore, would not use the word Hindu."³⁶ And Vivekananda was equally allergic to our cults growing around our mythological figures. In an interview given to the Hindu in Madras in February 1897, Vivekananda said: "The sublimity of the law propounded by the Ramayana or the Mahabharata does not depend upon the truth of any personality like Rama or Krishna, and one can even hold that such personages never lived." This in a way shows the inherent philosophic Hinduism's root principle, what Vivekananda perhaps follows quite elegantly. This is not to diminishing the ideal of Hindutva but to show that, Hindutva like other schools of thought never concentrate fairly in the philosophy of Vivekananda. If Hindutva comes into forefront taking an edge over Vivekananda it is not through Vedanta but through a different route. If Vedanta is a part of non discriminatory, all inclusive ideal than it embraces all human being, thinking as an embodiment of Brahman. And here there is no question of "the

³⁵ Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-1, p-6

³⁶ See the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol.3, Mayawati Memorial Edition, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 2007 pp 116-135

other”. Self is diminished and starts a new phase of life. To put it as Shankaracharya says, a man of “Jibonmukta” (free from all life bondage)³⁷. Hindutva hardly acknowledge this philosophic planes of Hinduism rather shrink the idea of Swami as a “narrow-minded, India centric Swami”. We hardly see Hindutva’s entry in to this Vedantic inclusiveness of swami of his universal message of brotherhood.

VIVEKANANDA’S TOLERANCE TOWARDS OTHER FAITH

Vivekananda’s articulation of a self image India and the picture on Muslims are not the same as pronounced by the Votaries of Hindutva. Vivekananda’s attitude to the Indian Muslims is lucidly stated in his address on the Future of India: “The Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the down-trodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. It was not the sword that did it all. It would be the height of madness to think that it was all the work of sword and fire.”³⁸ It was not distortion of history. It was a humane and intelligent interpretation of what happened in our country. Vivekananda gave a lecture on Mohammed at San Francisco on 25 March 1900 in which he said: “Mohammedanism came as a message for the masses. The first message was equality.”³⁹ nevertheless Vivekananda in his other address proves this above statement. Criticizing the British he said, Britisher’s have come to India to drain the wealth and exploit but the Muslims came here stayed and thought it as their homeland. This was perhaps in the mind of Vivekananda when he talked about India. India for Vivekananda was a conjuncture of different culture and religion. He wanted perfect mixture of a Vedantic Brain and Islamic Body to build a perfect India. Islam was an inspiration for Vivekananda. The brotherhood and fraternity is the significant appeal of Islam, he said. This shows that Vivekananda believed in the plurality of Indian culture contrary to a homogeneous nation.

To make this point more clear it would be better to go back to the literary life of Swami Vivekananda. We must not forget that the first literary work of Narendra was the Bengali

³⁷ I have derived this idea from Shankaracharya’s ‘Vivekachudamani’, for detail see the original of the book and for Jibonmukta Concept see from verse 428 to 441

³⁸ See the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayawati Memorial Edition, Adaitva Ashram Calcutta, Vol.3, p 294

³⁹ Ibid, Vol-1 p- 483.

translation of the first six chapters of *The Imitation of Christ*, the Latin work of the Dutch mystic Thomas Kempis (1225-1274), which was published in Suresh Samajpati's "Sahityakalpadrum" in 1889⁴⁰. In his preface to this work Vivekananda says: "The reader while reading this book will hear the echo of the Bhagavad-Gita over and over again." At the end of his lecture "The Way to the Realization of a Universal Religion" delivered at the Universalist Church, Pasadena, California on 28 January 1900, Vivekananda said: "The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded."⁴¹. In his letter to Mohammed Sarfaraz Husain dated 10 June 1898 Vivekananda wrote: "We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran"⁴². In his address "Indian Religious Thought" Vivekananda says: "Christians can learn from Hindus, and the Hindus can learn from Christians. Each has made a contribution of value to the wisdom of the world."⁴³ Of course he was in favour of the conjunction of two great systems, Islam and Hinduism, which can provide a true India. What Vivekananda formulate for this is that, Vedantic Brain and Islamic Body. To quote an original text of swami, which manifest his open, liberal and secular credential are as follows:

"The greatest name man ever gave to God is truth, Truth is the fruit of realization; therefore, seek it within the soul. Man's search for the ultimate truth, according to Swamiji, was like the chemist's resolution to find the one element from which all elements had derived. As chemistry will become perfect after reaching that single source-element, so is the case with religion. Once we reach the ultimate source of creativity, we discover the perfect unity of humanity, the summum bonum of Hindu religion. Only after realizing that ultimate source of unity could the Vedantic sage exclaim "Tat Tvam ASI"⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ I am thankful to Dr John Algeo of Theosophical Society, Adyar Chennai for this point. I met him at Chennai on 27th December 2008

⁴¹ CW Of Swami Vivekananda, vol.2, p 374

⁴² Ibid., vol-6, p 416

⁴³ Ibid., vol. 4 p 190

⁴⁴ CW of Swami Vivekananda, Vol.2, Mayawati Memorial Edition, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 2007, pp 454-455

Conclusion

Hindutva represents Vivekananda and represents him as if he was a part of Sangh Parivar. Vivekananda does not really fit into the brotherhood primarily because; he has many progressive ideas which Hindutva hardly subscribe to. Nevertheless, only the cultural part seems favorable to Hindutva and not the philosophic and social. Hindutva's rejection of the progressive ideas and the embrace of the narrow sectarian idea seem to be very selective. Hindutva's distortion and misappropriation of Vivekananda is also due to lack of understanding of his works. The partial reading and understanding of Vivekananda reflects Hindutva's poor intellectual capacity.

The next chapter will carry forward the discussion on Hindutva's representation of Vivekananda focusing on Vivekananda Kendra.

CHAPTER-3

REPRESENTATION OF VIVEKANANDA IN VIVEKANANDA KENDRA

Swami Vivekananda has not only being represented or misrepresented through his ideas and persona but he is being used as an institutional assert. There are numerous institutions, both private and public, has been built in the name of Vivekananda. Both in India and abroad the institutional mandate on Vivekananda has generated many question further. The non governmental organizations are also being named after Vivekananda now days. For instance, “Swami Vivekananda youth movement” of Mysore is one among them. It propagates the basic ideas of Swami Vivekananda such as satya, ahimsa, seva and tyaga. However, the ideals are attributed to Swami Vivekananda are sacrosanct at times for society. On the other hand, Ramakrishna Mission is an institution propagates the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideal. However, Vivekananda himself has established the institution for twin purpose. This is, “*Atmano Mokshaya jagathitaya cha*”, which means the salvation of the self and the upliftment of world. Nevertheless critics even term this Ramakrishna Mission as Saffron Mission. For them, the mission has an inherent aim of hindutva ideal. It is because there are many compatible ideas between the saffron brotherhood and the Mission. Both of the them believe that Hinduism is in danger, it consolidate and defend Hinduism making it more aggressive and expansionist. It further checks the growing influences of Christianity and created a Hindu polemic¹. Even scholars believe that the Ramakrishna Mission schools profess the ideological agenda of Hindutva and impart that to young generation. This imparts the man making and character building education. Vivekananda argued that religion should be the core of our education system as it helps to attain the real manhood.² But it also reminds us that the petition filed by the Mission as refuted calling them a Hindu sect. It becomes more difficult to prove the linkage as the former many times talk about the harmony of religions in their publications and practice. The Vedanta oriented Mission so far has kept

¹ See C.V Mathew, *Swami Vivekananda and the contribution to the saffron Mission*, chapter-4, Indian society for promoting Christian knowledge, New Delhi, 1999 pp 108-147

² J Kuruvachira, *Politicization of Hindu Religion in the Post Modern India*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2008 p 150

itself away from the brotherhood. Of course some misunderstand the propagation of Hinduism and Hindutva as same fold.

Beside Ramakrishna Mission one more institution takes the guise in the name of Vivekananda. It is Vivekananda Kendra. Though the former does not carry the name of Vivekananda, the later does it. The style, dress, way of functioning and ideas of the two institutions differ in a big way. Whereas Ramakrishna Mission follows a monastic order adding Swami and Ananda in there name renouncing the worldly affair wearing the saffron rob, the later does not follow any monastic order and they wear white Kurta, Dhoti Pajama. Unlike Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda Kendra does not follow either Ramakrishna or Sarada Cult. So these differences in the approach of these two organizations make the case further interesting as to why the Kendra emerges? Although there was Ramakrishna Mission to propagate the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, what best Kendra can urges to do. The case of the later need to be very interesting and to be discuss in detail with a critical approach.

FOUNDATION OF VIVEKANANDA KENDRA

To commemorate the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda in 1963, the RSS leadership decided to celebrate it in a grant way to pay the homage to the Swami. An idea to build out a lay order inside the sea rock of the southern tip of India in the name of Vivekananda was proposed. It draws its attention from Vivekananda who once said that “Even after I lay down the body, I would continue to work and inspire generations to come to carry my unfinished work”.³

Thus Vivekananda memorial, as it stands today is a memorial to Swami as to Shri Eknath Ranade, whose devotion to the work he had undertaken is not inspired by mere faith but by intellectual conviction. On the other hand, the building of the huge memorial was justified seeking the case that Vivekananda completed the passage of Wondering Monk at Kanyakumari and meditated at the rock near by the sea. The dates given to this are on 25th, 26th, 27th December 1892. The apologetics of the memorial argued that, at Kanyakumari started the rock memorial which is a unique symbol in which purity and

³ www.vkendra.org

unity dwells and that is the united symbol of nation. It too depicts the architectural beauty of the country. It is a symbol of unity because whole nation wished it, work and contributes for it. Person from all states participated in the inauguration. This is a memorial because it is conceived and labored mainly by RSS Swayamsevakas, blessed by Ramakrishna mission, designed by paramacharya of Kanchi Kamaoiti Peetham and for which swami Chinmoyananda of Chinmaya Mission gave the first donation. All the spiritual, cultural and national organizations supported it. It is also a memorial for which all state government and central government contributed .thus, the memorial became the focal point just as Kanyakumari is the meeting place of three seas On the other hand, it is presupposed that Vivekananda meditated in the rock and got to know about the past, present and future of India and got the idea of Advaita Vedanta, which he took to the west further. It was on the rock that Vivekananda discovered glorious India and later shook the world with Indian spirituality. This place has been taken as a sanctified place to build the memorial. However, the building of the memorial was not that innocent. A hard struggle had to be done for this. The opposition came from the large Roman Catholic community in Kanyakumari. They argued that the cross brought by Saint Francis Xavier was there in the rock⁴. To see this polar over view the Tamil Nadu government denied the permission to the committee to build the memorial. So finally the committee and its secretary approach to the Member of Parliament to pursue them to allow building the memorial. This got a huge publicity and the committee succeeded in getting the signature of all Members. The lone member who denied signing is E.M.S Namboodripad of Kerla. However, the plan to build the massive structure inside the sea got the political clearance. It further doubled the zeal of the RSS members who had taken the responsibility to build the lay order. The enthusiasm within the RSS leadership for this structure can be seen clearly through their mouth piece “organizer”. It was nevertheless declared as the pan Hindu consciousness. The committee organized functions after functions to reach to the like minded people. A grand function was held at Tilak Ghat of Triplicane Bridge where Golwalkar, Chinmayananda, Tenneti Viswanathan etc were present. For all India Chinmaya Mission, Swami Chinmayananda donated 10,000 rupees to the memorial

⁴ Interview with the pastor of the Roman Catholic Church of Kanyakumari, 31st December 2008

fund⁵. The foundation of this memorial was laid by Sri M.P Shivagnana. Where it has categorically said to the minority not to obstruct but welcome the memorial⁶. Inaugurating the rock memorial on September 2, 1970, the president of India shri V.V Giri called upon the fellow Indians to raise to the call of the nation. Pointing out the secular characteristics of Vivekananda, the president reminded us about the humanism and intense love Vivekananda carried towards the poor. Speaking on the occasion Shri M. Karunanidhi also raises the same issues and describes Vivekananda a messiah of masses⁷. About a fortnight after the opening of Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi Visited Kanyakumari to participate in the two months long celebrations organized by committee to mark the completion of Memorial. Later speaking at the meeting organized in honour of her, the Prime Minister laid her stress on the master spirit of Vivekananda. She said, Vivekananda followed a balanced approach by removing both material poverty and spiritual poverty⁸.

This provided the foundation of the Vivekananda Kendra. Of course the dream to build a Kendra to take care of the memorial and ideals of Swami was earlier their in the mind of the committee. It is clear from the view of the secretary of the Organizing committee Eknath Ranade. For Ranade, “the rock memorial is only a part of the dream. What is our aspiration? We want to establish a service Organization or a mission on the line of Ramakrishna Mission, but to be manned by non-Sannyasin. It will appeal the All India Dedicated cadres both man and women, for being employed to work with back ward class and areas of the country for the social and spiritual well being of the country.”⁹ it enhance in believing “spiritually oriented service mission”, which seeks to translate of Swami Vivekananda’s vision of glorious India in to action¹⁰. To actualize the vision, Kendra undertakes many projects, activities, Exhibitions and literary publications. It also

⁵ Vivekananda Centenary Celebration at Madras, *Organiser*, February 18th 1963 p 7

⁶ Vivekananda Rock Memorial, *Organiser*, February 4th 1963 p 10

⁷ ‘Build the nation and individual will build itself’, *Organiser*, September 14, 1970 pp 8-9

⁸ *Prime Minister’s Visit to Rock Memorial*, published in Madras on 22nd August as a booklet on 1971

⁹ ‘A part of the dream’, *Organiser*, September 14, 1970 p 8

¹⁰ See *the Story of Vivekananda Rock Memorial* as told by Eknathji, Vivekananda Kendra Publication, Madras, 1978

mobilize life workers, local workers to carry out various service activities through Yoga, camps for youth and women, Rural Development, Education, Development of natural resources and Tribal welfare etc. However, the vision of Vivekananda and the action of Kendra had to be tested further to get a clear picture. Behind the ideal of Kendra we can see a quotation of Vivekananda, who says:

“An aggregate or a congregation of men does not make a nation, nor do the geographical area and duration of time qualify a society to be known as a nation. A government formed on such a basis can be called a state, but not a nation. It is common goal or mission that makes a nation. All the constituents strive collectively for something noble, Service with spiritual orientation results in man-making which invariably and inseparably connected with nation building”.

Hopefully this is the famous statement which the Kendra takes as “maha mantra”. In day to day activity, this word of Vivekananda is used to inspire the Kendra workers. Thus VK is said to be a “Rastriya Yajna” which tries to protect the nation. It tries to maintain the rock memorial which has been created by patriotic minded people for the entire nation. It is should be noted that Eknath ji was chosen by Param Pujya Guruji Golwalkar to take up the challenging task. So after the construction of rock memorial the second phase started with the creation of Vivekananda Kendra. Pointing out to these once Eknathji said

“To put up a cement and concrete structure is not my work for which I am born, I am to erect a living and dynamic monuments which will be worthy of swami Vivekananda and will be capable of bringing into fruition his grand vision of future India”.

So VK is a spiritually oriented service mission started in 1972 as the living memorial of Swami Vivekananda comprising of cadre of dedicated Jeevanbratis, Sevabrati, Vanaprasti and thousands of local karyakartas as well as lacks of patrons, well wishers and publication subscribers. It is primarily guided by the idea to serve man as god and to guide by national ideals. For actualizing vision of swami Vivekananda, the Kendra has more than 225 branches and centre around various service activities.¹¹ Perhaps with this started the politics of Kendra, which invoke the name of Vivekananda directly to justify many activities. It further relegated the task to take up the idea of Kendra to Eknath Ranade and mould it in his own way. It is obvious from the life history of Eknath Ranade

¹¹ See www.vkendra.org/Kanyakunari accessed on date November 20, 2008

that he was a top functionary of RSS. And it is quite natural to have some RSS influence over Kendra. Perhaps the idea of Service and Glorious Bharat carries the legacy of RSS and injected the same in Vivekananda Kendra through Eknath Ranade. However, Eknath's background was well known to us. He was the author of the book "Swami Vivekananda's Rousing Call to Hindu Nation", which see Vivekananda as a propagator of regenerated Bharata or a Hindu Nation¹². It would be interesting to see the other attributes of the founder of Kendra, which might have molded activities of Kendra accordingly. Here is a brief life sketch of the founder of Kendra:

Eknath Ranade was born at Timtala of Amaravati Dist of Maharastra on 1914. Then he Came to Nagpur to had primary education in Prardanavisapura School. He joined RSS as swayam sevak on 1926. After passing his B.A and M.A Eknath Ranade became a pracharak of RSS in 1938. The terrible time comes to his life when he went to under ground after the ban of RSS alleging against the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. After spending about one month in jail Ranade took the responsibility to preach in the eastern parts of India. He also did out standing work for the refugee coming from Pakistan by establishing "Vastuhara Sahayata Samiti". Besides having the credit to build the Kendra and Rock Memorial, he also holds the responsibility as the general secretary and all India Baudhik Pramukh of RSS. Remaining as the president of Kendra and Vivekananda Kendra International he died in 1982 at Madras.

Nevertheless, in common view there is nothing wrong in propagating Glorious Bharat and Service concept if carried out with noble purpose without countering "the other". Further it will be clear when we will proceed to the various activities of the Kendra and its co-relation with Vivekananda. As we have seen the mission of the Kendra is derived from the idea of the Swami, so it seeks an explanation. It has primarily two missions are man making and nation building.

Probably the two missions is also the mission of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. Golwarkar keep insisting the two as the basic ideal. What ever the case it may be, Vivekananda Kendra accomplishes this twin purpose as their mantra. Taking inspiration from the famous statement of swami Vivekananda, VK tries to accomplish two missions.

¹² Eknath Ranade, 'Swami Vivekananda's Rousing call to Hindu Nation', Vivekananda Kendra Prakasan, Chennai, 7th edition 2006

The first one is man making and the second one is nation building. It quotes swami Vivekananda as;

“Each nation has a destiny to fulfill, each nation has a message to deliver, and each nation has a mission to accomplish. Therefore from very start, we must understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfill, and the place it has to acquire in the march of nation, the note it has to contribute to the harmony of races.”¹³

Thus VK aims at transforming our people’s inherent godwardness into right spiritual urge to serve god in man, and to canalized the spiritual fervour thus released, to work of national reconstruction. From here starts the idea of nation building and man making. But it is always a question what type of nation and man Kendra wants to make. Is it Seminal with the view of Vivekananda?

This nation building goes global and its mission to propagate the Indian mission to the abroad got a clean chit. This can be called the third phase of the expansion if Rock Memorial.

VK INTERNATIONAL: Crossing the Border

Vivekananda Kendra international is the expansion of Vivekananda Kendra. The first phase was the rock memorial phase, the second one is the Vivekananda Kendra phase and the third one is the Vivekananda international. This international was inaugurated in 2003 and launched in 1982. It is an initiative for the inter- civilization harmony through dialogue and understanding for building international understanding through Indian wisdom, there by promoting India cause at international level. Vivekananda Kendra is a humble but a determined beginning of a great national mission for global understanding. Thus, Vivekananda Kendra International cites:

“Everything looks propitious and Indian thought, philosophical and spiritual, must once more to grow over and conquer the world”.¹⁴

For the International as a great historian said “western begins must have Indian end”. The western begins has heralded centuries of clashes and conflicts, the Indian mission at the

¹³ See www.vkendra.org and the CW of Swami Vivekananda, *Common Base of Hinduism*, Vol.3, pp 366-384

¹⁴ See www.vkendra.org/intl

global level is the only alternative. VKI emphasis to be global in perspective and in scale of operations, supported by an extensive infrastructure manned by dedicated workforce of proven intellectual competence and integrity. It also dreams of allowing India to promote the greatness of its culture and wisdom and Endeavour the challenges we are facing in the global scale. Provided by the basics of the teaching of swami Vivekananda VKI provides a new international platform to the Indian voice, by creating awareness about Indian philosophy and wisdom towards propagating global peace and harmony and preventing the predicated clashes among civilizations. It thoroughly derives its inspiration from Vivekananda and for the Kendra shook the world with Indian thought, Hinduism and Spirituality. The creation of this international show the quest of Kendra to sphere head a global influence making other know about the idea Vivekananda.

Beside this international Vivekananda Kendra has a pan Indian presence. It has various branches all over India and it is sought to actualize the practical mission of Vivekananda. Indeed, this center plays a decisive role in propagating the inherent ideology of Kendra.

Organisation of Vivekananda Kendra

The head quarter of Vivekananda Kendra is situated at Kanyakumari. This is called Vivekanandapuram. Beside this there are many centers through which it operates. Its head quarters also located regionally. In north there are six centers including Delhi, Lucknow, Simla, Jodhpur and Bhilwara. In north east there are seven head quarters situated respectively at Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Tinsukia, Numaligarh, Karbi Anglong, Tezpur and Jorhat. In the southern part there are ten head quarters, which includes Kanyakumari, kodungllur, toothukoodi, Chennai, vallyoor, kallabalu, Madurai, Bangalore, rameswaram and Hyderabad. In the eastern part of India there are six head centre which includes kolkata, Bhubaneswar, port blare, birbhum, balasore and keonjhar. In the western side there are ten head centers which include Mumbai, pune, solapur, Nasik, Nagpur, pimpalad, satara, Malegaon, vadodara and Ahmedabad. In the centre there are four centers including Gwalior, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Indore.

ACTIVITIES OF VIVEKANADA KENDRA

Vivekananda Kendra had adopted the methodology of regularly conducting classes.

Those classes are of three types;

- Yoga Varga
- Swadhyay Varga
- Samskar Varga

This all has been undertaken to actualize the vision of swami Vivekananda's idea of "Jagatguru Bharat". Which some time falls under the purview of nation and nationalism. Kendra too organizes three stages of karyakarta prasikshana sibir to induct new workers to its cadres. Beside number of camps like yoga sibir, spiritual retreat, maitri sibir, personality development sibir are also organized at different places. There are many projects being undertaken by the Kendra.

YOGA VARGA

The vision of swami Vivekananda was to rebuild mother bharat in tune with her personality enshrined in yoga and spiritual lore. Yoga of swami Vivekananda is integral and it is spiritual. It is the holistic concept which rises, man is potentially divine.

This has been adopted by VK. The founder of Vivekananda Kendra thus tried to train the karyakartas to learn a great deal of organizational skill and patriotic favor. This holistic vision of Hindu nation enunciated by swami Vivekananda, in tune with emerging trends of popularity of yoga gave a direction to the Kendra to make yoga their core element. The ideology of this was to integrate the individual with society. To channelise the energy of organized collective life for productive nation building work.

Its vision is to solve the body-mind complexity and allow fulfilling the inner aspiration, which would be supreme act of service.

SWADHYAY VARGA

It tries to transform the peoples inherent god-wardens into the right spiritual urge rising out of the teaching of the Upanishads like "each soul is potentially divine", faiths in god, in turn means faith in faith in one self's that is ones personality to rise to divine heights. These spiritual fervors finally can be converted for national reconstruction. Its objectives

is coming, thinking and working together for national resurgence. It too aims at clarifying thoughts in national perspective. It is to know about our achievement and potentiality as nation. This is primarily focused on the Karma yoga slokas of Bhagwat Gita. This tries to aim at making strong man, who has taken unshakable interest in themselves thus enabling each of us to work for the rebuilding of this Hindu nation. This is to foster the ideal social order in this ancient land. Thus it takes inspiration from omkar, bharat Mata, swami Vivekananda and the founder of Kendra.

SAMSKAR VARGA

“Children are not the vessels to be filled; they are lamp to be lit”. These words of swami chinmayananda have been taken by VK. According to it the aim of Samskar Varga is to instill the love for the country. This is further to create urge to strive for excellence in all acts. It has again to bring out latent talents. Overall strive for five-fold personality development.

The above training, which per say inject the idea of the Kendra tries to build the people who can bind with them and with their ideology. Beside this, the Kendra undertakes many project and service activities. This all carries the prefix of Vivekananda. Kendra over a period of time has entered into the various walks of life through these activities. These seem very important to mention them for the sake of are clarification as to what kinds of project they are undertaking and how it link itself to swami Vivekananda vision.

PROJECTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Vivekananda Kendra runs many projects. These project works on the auspices of the supervision of the Kendra. It is better to have a glance over on the types of project they undertake.

Vivekananda Kendra prashikshan and seva prakalpa tries to train the workers of Vivekananda Kendra. It also encourages them to carry out some service activities for the local people. It organizes camps, balwadis, and health centre and boys hostel. This projects works on pimped and Nasik of Maharashtra. On the other hand the vocational project like Vivekananda Kendra skill training project enhance the opportunity learn tailoring and other vocational training for rural boys and girls. It also performs the

activities like balwadis, knitting and weaving. It is located at kallubalu of Karnataka. It argues that Indian women can solve their problem in their own way. It describes the connotation of Indian women as motherliness, hard worker, sacrifice, responsible etc. it tries to uphold the grand ideal of Hindu womanhood. Thus VK started this project in 1997 to make women economically independent. In this traing center beside this they teach primary reading, writing, cooking, health, hygiene, story telling, patriotic songs are also taught. This traing center also teaches yoga and martial art for confidence development.

Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya have a twin objective, the first one is the man making and the second is the nation building. It runs residential and non-residential schools. This is located at various places. In Arunachal Pradesh there are 26 vidhyalaya where as in Assam there are 14, in Nagaland 1, Andaman's 9, Karnataka one and Tamilnadu has two vidyalaya. There are man making education being given at 51 vidyalaya for tribal and rural children in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Andaman, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. It has proximately accommodated 16,000 vanavasi students and hostel for them. By this VK invites young teacher to contribute to this Gyana Yagna.

Vivekananda Kendra Arun Jyoti project tries to possess development trough culture. It is located at Arunachal Pradesh. Its activities include Anoupacharik siksha manch, swathya siksha manch, yuva manch, mahila manch and sanskritik manch.

Vivekananda institute of culture brings forth the unique attributes of the north-east and nourish the commonalities. It organizes workshop, seminar, documentation, projects, lecture series, study circle and reference library. It locates at Guwahati and Arunachal Pradesh. It has been established with a purpose to discover the cultural continuity of the north eastern state with rest of India¹⁵.

Natural resource development projects aims at the sustainable development of society. It gives more trace on cost-effective housing, water management, organic farming, indigenous health system and renewable energy. This one is locate at Kanyakumari. This is called the world renowned project by Vivekananda Kendra. Under this project four types of activities are undertaken. That are water shed management, rural housing,

¹⁵ See www.vkendra.org/arunjyoti

indigenous medicines and farming. Gramodaya Darsan Park of Kanyakumari is one of the examples of this.

Vivekananda Kendra rural welfare project is with socio-economic intend. It tries to aimed at the all round development of the tribal women. Its activities includes training cum production center in weaving, tailoring, embroidery, different agro based training and demonstration, a day scholar school and awareness camps. It is located at khatkhathi of Assam. Kendra has adopted 5 southern district of Tamil Nadu namely Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Virudhu Nagar, Thoothukuddy and Ramachandrapuram for the all round economic development of man, woman and children of this backward area. As a part of this Kendra has 75 balwadis for 2000 children. Its weekly Bal Samskar varga are held 200 places attended by 7000 children. It also organizes the cultural competitions where last year 27.000 children participated out of 1800 school.

Vivekananda Kendra medical research foundation provides the medical services. This is though Vivekananda Kendra (NRL) hospitals. Its treatment based on the modern information technology. It has the medical camps at thirteen villages regularly. The VK hospital of pullong provides the mobile medical service. This is located at Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The Numaligarh refinery complex of Assam situates the VK-NRL hospital. This 40 bedded hospital well equipped one not only caters to the need of 4000 staff but attend the 13 surrounding villages.

VK Prakasan Trust publishes books to spread the noble thoughts of swami Vivekananda and healthy literature to inspire youth with message. This publication includes in English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarat, Assamese and Tamil. This trust can be located at Chennai, Jodhpur, pune, palitana and Guwahati. This publications includes as –

- rousing call to Hindu nation by Eknath Ji Ranade
- India's contributions to world thought and literature, a master piece by eminent scholar – a reference manual for research and history.
- Dheyeya marga which deals with the meaning of Kendra prayer.
- Heart beat of Hindu nation by P. Parameswaran.
- Gramodaya which explain the permanent exhibition on sustainable development-living intone with nature.
- O India wake up by Eknath ji Ranade

- Katha vivekanandacharya in Marathi
- Sacred earth, sadhna of service, story of rock memorial by Eknath ji Ranade.
- Surya Namaskar and Yoga books.

VK Vedic Vision Foundation keeps in view of creating of a network of thinkers and scholars of Vedic studies. It conducts the research on Vedic knowledge and supporting Vedic scholars. It encourages dissemination of Vedic knowledge in order to practice the Vedic truth in family. Its activities include the publications, yoga, pranayam courses, personality development camps, celebrations, satsangs and spiritual discourse. It is located at kodungallur of kerla. It gives trace on translating Vedic vision of the risis in the day to day life and making it practical the message swami Vivekananda gave to all.

Vivekananda Kendra international loves to take initiative of harmony between civilization through dialogue and discussion. It organizes conferences, seminar and study circle. Its head office is located at New Delhi.

The activities carried out by all projects and centre includes the followings.

- ❖ Over 45 vidyalayas for tribal and rural children in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Andaman, Tamilnadu and Karnataka.
- ❖ Hotel for vanavasi children.
- ❖ 150 balwadis all over the country.
- ❖ Running the non formal school for preservation of Vedic vidyas.
- ❖ Personality development camps for the children.
- ❖ Youth camps to motivate them to lead purposeful life.
- ❖ Cultural examination to increase the awareness in students about the greatness as well as relevance of Indian culture.
- ❖ Non-formal education through audio-visuals.
- ❖ Matru-sammelan and women awareness camps for tribal women to motivate them to lead purposeful life.
- ❖ Deep pooja and Shiva pooja.
- ❖ Vocational training in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamilnadu.
- ❖ Amrita surabhi daily offering of handful rice by women, which is collected to feed around 12,000 poor children.

- ❖ Residential spiritual retreat of seven days duration.
- ❖ Residential yoga sibir of fifteen days duration.
- ❖ Promotion of the natural gas like bio gas, building materials, herbal medicines.
- ❖ Training masons, farmers etc. in appropriate rural technology.
- ❖ Seminar and lecture series in Vedic studies and publishing of Vedic literature.
- ❖ Seminar, workshops and symposium to create awareness in ecology.
- ❖ Seminars and symposiums on traditions of vanavasi communities for their protection and promotion.
- ❖ Hearth care camps including eye check up and operation.
- ❖ Inter-civilization dialogue and understanding in perspective of Hindu civilization.
- ❖ Research and documentation of traditional customs, rituals of vanvasi communities.
- ❖ Publishing thought provoking literature through magazines like Yuva Bharati(English monthly),Vivekananda Kendra patrika(English six monthly, thematic),Kendra bharati(Hindi monthly),Vivek vichar(Marathi,formonthly),Vivek vani(Tamil monthly),Jagriti(Assamese, three monthly),vivek sudha(Gujarati, Three monthly) and many other books also.¹⁶

Vivekananda Kendra observes many festivals. These festivals also observed in other centers too. Guru Purnima is observed on ashada poornima to inculcate respect and pride towards our forefathers; remembrance of our guru – iswar- to prepare ourselves as an instrument in his hands to do his work with attitude of sadhna. Their objective are to acquaint with our guru tradition and know more about guru Omkar.To reconnect with iswara and to remind our selves and to remind that we are his work. In this day generally bhajans, lectures, discussions on great Guru Sisya tradition and its contemporary significance has been generally discussed.

Swami Vivekananda after wondering all over India, came to Kanyakumari and sat in meditation on 25, 26 and 27 December 1982. Here he felt inspiration to go to parliament of religion. Thus every year from 25th December to 12th January every year to awaken the national ideal and consciousness among the youth focusing on the strength of the nation, this festival occurs. Its objectives are to bring the focus of the youth to the dynamics of

¹⁶ These activities were written on the walls of the Gramodaya Project situated at Kanyakumari.

the mother land, her great present strength and also her dignity to guide the world. It aims to spread the message of swami Vivekananda among the public, focusing on cultural tradition of our country. And to pay homage to all who laid their lives for the protection of motherland. The other festival the Kendra observes is Universal Brotherhood day. Swami Vivekananda in his lecture at Chicago starting from 11 September gave a call for universal brother hood. He said that man in the earth has continued to too long fanatic about insisting their religion alone was true and other religion was being false no right to exist. He also stressed that as long as it would persist there can be only blood shed in the name of religion and no brother hood which the religion brings would possible. Swami Vivekananda this call to end sectarianism and bigotry and go to a perfect harmony became the mantra of universal brotherhood day. Its objectives are. To bring to focus of our youth about the dynamics of our motherland and to spread the message of swami Vivekananda among the public. Focusing on cultural tradition of India, paying homage to all laid their lives for the protection of motherland. In this day Kendra organizes competitions at school, college, seminars, and group discussions and in depth study of Swamiji's teaching is also happens.

Gita Jayanti is observed on Margasirsh Sukla Ekadasi. Its objectives are to popularize Gita study for making life purposeful life, for national resurgence and to nourish ourselves with the vision of the risis. Sadhna Diwas is observed on the day of 19th November. This is the birth day of the founder of Vivekananda Kendra. This is to mark respect to that soul and to mark his vision and reorient our dedication to the mission of national resurgence. Sadhna divas have two objectives are to pay homage to the founder of Vivekananda Kendra, Eknath ji Ranade the divine bharaat is destined to guide the world. So in this iswari karya of national resurgence karyakarta is the chosen instrument. When the karyakarta will work with sadbhabana it becomes their sadhana. In this day Kendra organizes the annual meeting of karyakartas and taking up the responsibilities.

Vivekananda Kendra organizes all India camps every year. These camps are two types one is spiritual retreat and other is yoga siksha sibir. The duration of the first one is 6 days where as the second one is of 15 days. Spiritual retreat is organized in the month of February and august. It is for the people who are more than forty years of age. The donation for this is 1000/-only. The yoga siksha sibir, organized in the month of June and

December. This is exclusively for the people who are more than 18 years of age. The donation for this sibir is 1500/-only. The medium of this sibir is English and Hindi. The syllabus of sibir is as follows;

- ✓ Yogic relaxation methods, japa and the technique of meditation
- ✓ Study of yoga darsana
- ✓ Bhagwat gita
- ✓ Indian culture
- ✓ Life and message of great men and women of our country
- ✓ Chanting of strotas, bhajans, and songs for emotional culture.
- ✓ Visits to Vivekananda rock memorial, Kanyakumari temple
- ✓ Visiting/trekking Marutmalai Mountain.
- ✓ Study and Practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and Kriya

In this sibir the food is simple and vegetarian.

Gramodaya Park

This is located on the right corner of Kendra. This gives trace to the holistic approach to life. This is developed by the idea of swami Vivekananda who said that nation lives in cottage and relies on the upliftment of the masses. This park lays its emphasis on the mutual harmony and interconnected tendency of human being with nature and animal. So it tries to build that technological recourse which will be able to take every one among us without giving a negative impact. So there is a river and drain management system within it. It has also got the presidential award for this. It gives trace on how to manage the water before going to sea. Apart from this have also sixty herbal planets. It believes in sustainable agriculture. This can last for many years. The medicine produced from here goes to the dispensary. So the bharat Gramodaya Park put here to show the success stories of ideal management of our water and other recourses. So that the mother earth can nourish and bharatmata can be cherished by humanity for her reverence to nature as well as development through culture. This Gramodaya Park has some direct reference with the idea of Vivekananda. According to an official of the park, Vivekananda wanted that if India will rise it will rise from villages and cottages keeping perfect feet to feet

with the nature. The consequence of that idea is a result of the Gramodaya Park, he added.¹⁷

Swami Vivekananda pictorial exhibition

This exhibition is situated in the mid campus of Vivekanandapuram. It is sponsored by many individuals, institutions, charity trust, banks and so on. This is very nicely maintained and entry for this is made through tickets. First few pictures of this exhibition depict the glory of India. It shows the picture of Kabir, Nanak, Shankara, Gargi, Maitree, Nimbarka etc. But it exclusively deals with the life of swami Vivekananda. At last it shows the toleration and activities of the Kendra.¹⁸

Gangotri Exhibition

It is an exhibition which is organized in the honour of Eknath Ranade. It **portrays** the exhibit talent and labour that man put for the work of rock memorial and Kendra. Here we can see the back round and life stretch of Eknath Ranade. This exhibition further portrays the photograph of Golwalkar and Hedgewar, from whom the founder took the inspiration. In his personal room he has the photo of guruji, Vivekananda and lord Ganesha. This exhibition has the letters, correspondence, dress, and the signatures of Members of parliaments who supported for a rock memorial. The rare photographs of eminent peoples visit is also their. This exhibition is solely in the honour of him. His shirt, kurta, court, jacket all are still there for the visitors.

SAMARTHA BHARATA PARVA

There was a small exhibition inside the chitrakoot hall of Kendra, which is called samartha bharata parva. This shows the contempory achievement of India through science and technology. Here I saw the photo of Chandrayan. The achievement of India's

¹⁷ Interview with the in charge of the Gramodaya Park of Kanyakumari on 30th December 2008

¹⁸ This indeed picturises more on the glorification of India and its ancient culture

space mission is one of the remarkable sites of this exhibition. The achievements of sunita William, Kalpana chawla, A.P.J Abdul Kalam were also there. ¹⁹

WONDERING MONK EXHIBITION

This exhibition is situated outside the premises of Kendra. But it maintains and a part of Kendra. This exhibition depicts the years of Vivekananda who spend most of his time as a wondering monk before leaving for America. This becomes more useful because his wondering monk phase ends at Kanyakumari. Where he supposed to enlighten himself and knew about the past, present and future of India. It depicts how the all India tour of Vivekananda full with the quest to know India and its people. It also depicts various stories of Vivekananda during his parivrajaka days.

JEEVAN BRATEE: life blood of the Kendra

One needs the dedicated workers to actualize/to give a concrete shape this various activities Kendra proposed to do. So this full time workers helps in shaping and sharing the mission of Kendra. So Vivekananda Kendra calls upon the inspiring people to join the Kendra. It questions us, whether we are among the hundreds thousand of Swami Vivekananda. It finally says we are one among those who swami had in mind for awakening our people to the mission of our motherland. It quotes swami, where he says; “a hundred thousand man and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the lord, and never to lions courage by their sympathy for poor and the down trodden, will go over to the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up, the gospel of equality.”²⁰

It by this appeal that

“Come; dedicate yourself for the service of nation as a full time worker of VK.”

If one does not have family responsibility and some is interested in the ideal choice for the mission swami had placed before. They are welcome to join the Kendra. Thus for the Kendra, it is not a career – but a mission.

¹⁹ In my visit to VK, Kanyakumari I felt that it is giving more importance to Nuclear Science.

²⁰ See www.vkendra.org

Hindutva and Vivekananda: an Appraisal

Kendra and its Hindu Nationalist Link

So far it is clear to us that Vivekananda Kendra carries many projects, service activities, cultural functions and festival in the name of Vivekananda. It also argues that, the inspiration of Vivekananda works as an inspiring wheel behind Vivekananda Kendra. It need to seen that how far Kendra is able to succeed in actualizing the vision of Vivekananda, in whose footprints the Kendra is being built. Of course, this is the first instance where an institution has been build in the name of Vivekananda to implement his ideas. When there is an attempt to address the dream of Vivekananda, the dream it self has been often misunderstood. The attributes are being made to Vivekananda by building an institution to fulfill his dream and vision, scholar argues is a strategy to propagate own ideological pack in the name of the legend. This allegation comes close, when we see the way memorial and Kendra was build. The politics of building the memorial through the dictation of RSS is itself not out of controversy. This meteoric love for Vivekananda may not be that sacrosanct as we think but it might have a wider application to institutionalize Vivekananda. The involvement of Hindu Nationalist Organization like RSS created a buzz around the secular intelligentsia and the true lover of Vivekananda. Many of them wanted Vivekananda in and saffron out. For them it is the new strategy of RSS to mobilize support where it is relatively weak through Vivekananda Kendra²¹. Thus when we are aware about such facts the character building organization distracts our faith. We think as to what really the Kendra wants. It is a strong organization to fulfill the vision of the Swami or a shuttle organization to fulfill the unfulfilled the RSS progeny. So the fatal flaws of this Organization is that it has the shadow of RSS, it can grow a lot appealing all if disassociate itself from RSS. Independent institution having no preoccupation or back up can attract many intellectuals. For the genuine representation of Vivekananda, Kendra as an organization needs to be objective and value laden to fulfill the Vision of Vivekananda.

²¹ Walter Anderson and S Dalme, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: the RSS and Hindu Revivalism*, West View Press, Boulder and London, 1987 pp 137-139

On the other and we can see the commonality in strategy, functions and activities of Kendra with Rastriya Swyam Sevak Sangh. Like RSS, Kendra also lays its emphasis on the seva sangathan and mobilization at the Hindu community. the idea of seva is central to both Kendra and religions discourse, where as the seva of regions discourse is interest free the seva of other institutions are for there own community, society of even for its own interest. That's why seva of these institutions are itself exclusive and driven out by some purpose.

Despite the institutional approach to appropriate Vivekananda by the Kendra it seems evaporate enough as to why the Kendra chooses Vivekananda? Why not Gandhi, Aurobindo, Tilak or some other sons of India? It is to remember that Gandhi was also the ardent follower of Hindu culture, a man dedicated to the service or the nation. His service goes to extend of serving personality to the harijans or down trodden. We don't see Gandhi's vision in Kendra's work but we very often mark that swami came as handy to Kendra. Establishing an institution in the name of someone needs a perfect understanding of the person concerns. Through Vivekananda become a handy to Kendra's mission and activities hence need an examination as to what are the ideas of swami Vivekananda and the idea of the institution crated in the name of Vivekananda. It is further interesting to know the convergent and divergent views of the both. So some where it seems Kendra has a preconceived notion and some selective ideas of Vivekananda were put in to that. Nothing other than Vivekananda can appeal to mass for the ephemeral and invocation or Bharat. . The point here is, why Vivekananda only? Do this institution genuinely fulfill the vision at Vivekananda or propagate own vested interest in the name at the swami. This is indeed a major issue in front of us.

Kendra and Hindu Nationalism

The project and service activities are not the sole constituency of the Kendra. There are many spheres over which Kendra silently operates and preach its ideology. To protect the ancient Indian culture and cultural places has been the motto for the same from long since. When one enters into the gate of the Kendra Head Quarters at Kanyakumari, a picture of Mother India sitting on the lion holding the saffron flag can be seen. And some other places of Kendra the photos of Vivekananda can be seen hanging on the wall. The

other interesting story is that the naming of the dormitory and the guest house. All are named after a holy place of India like Tirupati, Puri, Dhwaraka, Brindaban, Avanti etc. this shows the cultural entrenchment of the Kendra to invoke the cultural and historic symbol of India. This is not just one case but there are numerous examples of this. The Kendra talks about glorious Bharat which means a glorious Indian nation. This theory pre-supposes through the ancient ideals like Vedic vision and spirituality. Unfortunately the nation means to the Kendra a Hindu nation, yoga a Hindu way and spirituality, a manifestation of the divine Bharat. If such types of articulation will be the order of the day than where is the question of genuine Hinduism. That's why, these types of self created Gyana seems very exclusive.²²

One can see ample of inspiring quotations of swami Vivekananda, saint Tiruvalluvar and Eknath Ranade inside the Kendra premises. These quotations are all selective and inspirational. This all are related to energize India and its potential. This all is through religion, spirituality and idea of service. This invocation is being proved in another case, through exhibitions. Kendra organizes many exhibitions, some are permanent and some are temporary. It also follows the same legacy of invoking India and Indian Culture through Vivekananda. Often we see the use of Spirituality and Science of ancient India to give it legitimacy of ancient Bharat. It will be clear after discussing some of them briefly. Like the Hindutva's representation of Vivekananda, Kendra also woos youth in the name of Vivekananda. The following are the few examples where the quotations of the Swami are used to inspire the youth in the name of Vivekananda.

"Let us proclaim to every soul...- Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, Awake from hypnotism of this weakness. None is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the GOD within you, do not deny him! Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism, has been & is upon our race. O ye modern Hindus, de-hypnotize yourselves." "The way to do that is found in your own sacred books. Teach yourself, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping should and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent

²² See Eknath Ranade, *Rousing Call to Hindu Nation*, Vivekananda Kendra Prakasan, Madras, 2006 p 4

will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. If there is anything in the Gita that I like , it is these verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence, of Krishna's teaching "He who sees the supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in the things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the self by the self, and thus he goes to the highest goal."

The above stanza is enough to suggest what actually the Kendra wants from the youth. Thus Kendra proposed many activities for the youth. It conducts classes and camps. This training are said to be more as value education. But the major activities of the Kendra show that these are divided into three groups.

Do we really need a Kendra in the Name of Vivekananda?

Often the question arises what is the need to have Vivekananda Kendra to fulfill the unfulfilled vision of vivekananda as we know Ramakrishna Math and Mission was enough to carry out the vision of Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda ideal. Unlike Vivekananda Kendra, Ramakrishna math gives and overall evaluation of Vivekananda starting from philosophy, literature, nation, religion and Indian situation. This input open up the boundary of discussion. Of course it is often accused or not beings critical to Vivekananda philosophy. This hagiographic account really helps us to provide a base for further discussions. Surprisingly Ramakrishna mission also takes up seva, service and sangathan. In 1889 Vivekananda himself serve the plague victims and that trend still goes on. So for a common man it reminds us as a pertinent questions that, why Kendra in spite of the presence of Ramakrishna math?

Somewhere other when we proceed further we see polar difference between Vivekananda's idea and Kendra's idea. Where as Vivekananda talked about a composite, plural Indian society, Kendra lays its stress upon the idea of Hindu nation. Vivekananda did not believe seva, puja or sanghatan to confront with some other institutions or some other faith. The church of Kanyakumari and Kendra's confrontation is already pointed out. Of course, Vivekananda did not want that glorious Bharat born out or confrontation

with other faith of religion. He was a man for tolerance, openness, non sectarian and a true Hindu²³.

Activities of Kendra and its Praxis

Even the life workers vivekananda Kendra doesn't have much knowledge about Vivekananda. The soul of Kendra- the bratees even doesn't have the idea about the mission and vision of Vivekananda. How can they carry the mission forward if they do not have much idea about swami's ideal? My interviews with many bratees make it clear. The only thing the bratees know that he was a Hindu protagonist and immensely filled with the spirit or nationalism and patriotism²⁴.

However, some where Kendra has to be credited for its scientific and some of the secular character. The NARDEEP projects, Yoga, spiritual training, rural development, natural resources management are the part of that process. What can be said here is that development, self development, yoga, physical fitness and spiritual development are the essential characteristics of every society and if Kendra is professing that without any other pre condition or ideological back round than it should be appreciated. But I think the seva and yoga should not result in masculinity in the name of man making. The development projects for rural area should not be used for vote bank or for a narrow purpose. Where as spirituality should not be narrow down as material vs. spiritual, showing the superiority of spiritualism, rejecting the west as material and accepting east as spiritual. Development self development and spiritual development should be used for the higher ideas like "*Basudeva Kutumbakam*" or world as a family. This should not be any way used symbolically, silently and strategically to gain the narrow interest.

Scholars even reject the training process and education system of the Kendra. It is being seen a number of Vivekananda Kendra vidyalaya, balbadis and training camps for youth established by the Kendra. But when we see the varga training like samskar, swyadhya and yoga, where the concept like Hindu nation, glorious nations etc are taught. The Kendra runs many schools for vananvasi and rural children. It impacts a hindutva ideal in

²³ Interview with the pastor of the Church, on 31st December 2008 at Kanyakumari.

²⁴ Interview with Raju jadav and Manoj kumar Das (two bratees), at Kanyakumari on 30th Dec 2008. It is surprising that this educated Bratees even don't have much idea on Swami Vivekananda.

that area as j kuruchavira refers. For him these schools have earned reputation and often they are favored over those Christian missionaries' schools. It has even entered into the tribal and north east areas. In the north eastern states the members of schools are rising. This is perhaps to protect the indigenous culture imparts value education based on the ideas of sanatana dharma. This opening up schools and the entrenchment in to the tribal society is also seen by many to encounter the missionaries and their conversion. Vivekananda Kendra institute of culture, Guwahati and Arun Jyoti project of Arunachal Pradesh aims to keeps the cultural continuity of north east and development of Arunachal respectively²⁵.

Glance on the publications and periodicals of Kendra can teach a good lesson about Kendra's deals. It is most of the time based on the cultural ethos of India. Some books deals with Vivekananda which describe the swami the same as hindutva pictures. Ranades "rousing call for Hindu nation" and of "India wake up" are two such book. A recent publication has been bought out on Christianity. Even the special edition of Kendra patrika was devoted to Golwalkar, the second sarasangha chalak of RSS. These publications hardly deals with India's development or Vivekananda philosophy rather used it for own ideological mouth piece. This type of publication seems very exclusive. Which hardly catch the inherent logic of Vivekananda's philosophy? So the so called Gyana Yagna by the Kendra is a subverted Gyana Yoga.

The festival s Kendra observes are all related to the purpose of Kendra's mission. But the appeal of the leader to the workers and bratees in this festival needs a special mention. On Geeta jayanti, the importance to Hindu family festivals and philosophy is sought. It lays its emphasis on karma yoga which gives more emphasis on duty towards family society and nation. So on the eve of gita jayanti it is necessary for us to do justice to our motherland. According to Vivekananda, Kendra Quotes:

"I do not merely see in to the future nor do I care to see/. But one vision I see clear as life before me that the ancient mother has awakened once more sitting on her throne rejected

²⁵ J Kuruvachira, *Politicization of Hindu Religion in the Post Modern India*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2008 p 150

more glorious than ever. Proclaim her to the entire world with the voice of peace and benediction”²⁶

So for Kendra, duty to the nation means the duty to Hindu nation and swami is the propagator of that divine theory. Even other festivals also seek the same appeal do whatever your founder says but in the name of Vivekananda. Here Vivekananda becomes a scapegoat or a “balika bakra” (a similar Hindi analogy) in the hand of an institution for the interest of the founder. This indeed should not happen in a democratic India. We should not use any legendary, great pan Indian figure for our own sake. Vivekananda Kendra in any way should not represent Vivekananda in that way what he is not or he does not possess. Let hope for a more genuine Vivekananda comes in for the genuine interest and a true representation and non partisan approach can only help us in this regard.

Conclusion

Vivekananda Kendra is established to fulfill the vision of Swami Vivekananda. It is true that the name of Vivekananda is used in all most all activities of the Kendra. However, representations of Kendra are a partial and lop -sided overview of Vivekananda. By the way of this representation Kendra excludes many nuances of Vivekananda philosophic and secular outlook. Kendra’s approach also seems exclusive when it talks about Hindu nation and possess a pro-Hindutva lineage. If we are building an institution or trying for a civil society initiative then we should be open and free from any pre occupation or ideological lineage. This is same for all. Vivekananda Kendra’s pro Hindutva picture makes it unclear as what this institution wants exactly. Taking the name of Vivekananda and propagating its own vested interest might be an insult to the great saint. Thus it would be better for Kendra not to use Vivekananda as a strategic weapon to promote own self interest to fight “the other”. Vivekananda is beyond that prevailed polemics and we have to see him as a national symbol that transcends the narrow and sectarian interest.

²⁶ See www.vkendra.org/festivals/gitajayanti

Conclusion

Vivekananda's contribution to the construction of new India is immense. He has pioneered many emancipatory ideas on religion, society, polity and culture. These efforts of Vivekananda are not sectarian but an open deliberation on humanitarian ideals. The dissertation argues that Vivekananda, a key figure in the 19th century resurgent India, needs to be represented properly. He need not be seen as a narrow Hindu or as an arrogant swami or only as a cultural nationalist. Vivekananda should be seen in his true self and there should be no misrepresentation but due representation. The foremost argument the dissertation proposes is that Vivekananda should be represented genuinely without any prejudices and distortion.

No doubt, Vivekananda has multiple representations ranging from philosophic intent to a Vedantic ideal. His representations show that he has contributed a lot to the knowledge of India. His philosophic ideals rests with robust spiritualism deviating from a sectarian legacy preach for Vedantic Ideal. His Vedantic ideal is non discriminatory, all pervading which embrace the humanity. Here there is no difference between a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian or a Jew. This is well articulated in the World Parliament of Religion speech. Vivekananda as a philosopher free from all bondage of Maya, who believe in social progress. However, Vivekananda's idea of religion is also falls in the trap of that revolutionary content. He indeed modernizes the Hindu religion. He criticized the orthodox trend of Hinduism and talked about a universal spiritual personalized form of religion. Criticizing the authority of scriptures Vivekananda traces the rule of reason. He believed that reason should prevail over religion. These views of Vivekananda seem quite radical and support the modernization of Hinduism. He was on the other hand an ardent critique of untouchability, priesthood and orthodox cults of Hinduism. He says India got into degeneration from the time the word mleccha entered in to India. Vivekananda was not sectarian or ethnocentric for his religion but he acknowledges the inner tenets of Islam and Christianity. He imagined for a perfect mixture of two cultures like Islam and Hinduism for the upliftment of India. He was a genuine Hindu who believed in the culture of recognition than devastation, ture interpreter of East in the west. Demonstrating the limitation of oriental discourse, Vivekananda presented a genuine

overview of India clearing all the ill informed ideas prevailing that time. His indigenous voice got a wide appeal in the far west and the love for Hinduism. Vivekananda was a nationalist in true sense. He loved his mother land as like an ordinary Indian. But he was not a cultural nationalist or Hindu Nationalist as he always prefers a perfect corroboration with other culture and country. He talked about the material and cultural benefits by this corroboration. He describes the advent of materialism to be there in India as like the western countries. He was completely aware of the Bharat he was talking about. The strength and limitations are also well recognized by the scholar. So his nationalism was sacrosanct and beyond the narrow mentality.

Vivekananda was also a messiah of the poor, downtrodden and marginalized. He believed in the material development of India. He once said that if religion comes to the poor man it should come as bread. He challenged the sannyasis regarding the nature of their sadhna which is not lean towards the common people. For him all Sannyasis seating for moksha without recognizing the peoples concern are futile. These types of view make Vivekananda a true champion of the people and the masses. That's why he is often seen as a propagator of state paradigm, which gives ample stress on the development of the people through state.

Beside these multiple representations Vivekananda is also seen as a figure which he was not or did not possess. This is to refer to the personality cult of Vivekananda. Where we see Vivekananda as only a divine and personified character. We find most of these personified representations in many literatures. This only discusses whether Vivekananda smoke or not? Is it true that he was memorizing everything at his first reading? What was his relationship with Sri Ramakrishna? Does it true that Ramakrishna transfer all his mystic power to Vivekananda or the later ate the vomiting of the former? Even the celibacy and the clothes are also being questioned and appropriated. This is what makes Vivekananda represented badly. Many scholars and schools including Hindutva believes in this theory of representing Vivekananda an extraordinary person. This representation in a ways fails to envisage the philosophy of Vivekananda and struck with the personal character and charisma of Vivekananda.

Hindutva represents Vivekananda in various ways. It is symbolic, strategic and a silent penetration to the domain of the great Swami to fulfill its own ideological mission. It often sees Vivekananda as a cultural nationalist or a Hindu nationalist. It owes some Hindu by the name of Vivekananda also. Often youths are being inspired by his name. His only description is that Vivekananda was a saviour of the Hindu Race. Vivekananda was used politically and his theory is also tactically used to propagate the idea of 'other'. Masculinity, regenerated Jagat Guru Bharat and services are the three main components the hindutva attributes to Vivekananda. This is a fundamental conspiracy to cause to use Vivekananda as the votary of soft Hindutva. On the other hand, Hindutva's representation hardly recognizes other noble aspects of Vivekananda. We barely listen the Vedantic socialistic ideal of Swami from the Hindutva, the scientific Raja yoga or the tales of the poor from their literature. It also hardly recognizes the inherent material and dialectical vision of the Swami. Rejecting the revolutionary ideas of Vivekananda, Hindutva only picks of the ideas feel suitable to them. This selective and partial evaluation of Vivekananda distorts Vivekananda and fails to see him in totality. While dealing with this representation, a famous analogy from a Hindu scripture is remembered. There was a sage called "Astabakra", who is very profound in Veda and Upanishads from his childhood and defeated many old scholars through his scholarly articulation and sane vigour. He was a man of wit and wisdom. His 'Astabakra Gita' deals with a valuable treatise on morality and norms. But the peculiarity the sage carries is that he looks very ugly. His body bends in eight places. Though outwardly looks ugly the sage was an embodiment of wisdom. Same happens to Vivekananda due to the representation of Hindutva. A beautiful, wisdom lover and philosophic swami looks ugly outward. Hindutva has hardly any tendency to see the inward wisdom but prefers to "Astabakranise" Vivekananda. Astabakra became ugly due to the curse of his father of pointing out the fault of him while chanting Veda and Vivekananda became ugly due to the curse of Hindutva of due to the later's poor reading. What the dissertation tries to put forward is that it acknowledge the inward Astabakra and reject the illusion of outward ugly representation of the same. This is what same for Vivekananda.

On the other hand the institutional representation of Vivekananda through Vivekananda Kendra is another domain. It is being build in the name of Vivekananda to fulfill the vision of Vivekananda but hardly does anything concrete to shape it. The training of service, strength, yoga and setting of Vidyalaya, Rural Development, and Tribal Development etc as a part of the construction of Bharat was not the dream of Vivekananda as such. Rather he was in favour of a self invoking, state sponsored Development seeker. There is also no justification to do such kind of things in the name of Vivekananda as such creating owns Vidyalaya, Balbadis and various centers. The politics of this institution is well known from the day of its inception when its founder declares that Vivekananda gave a rousing call to the Hindu Nation. This Hindu Nation and Cultural Bharat was not the aim of Vivekananda but he believed in diversity of culture and a plural India. Kendra need not to take the copy right to fulfill the vision of Vivekananda as the vision itself is unclear and opaque to them. This poor understanding of the vision causes a major distortion of Vivekananda's idea. There are many such lacunas the Kendra possesses. Even the training of Varga, preparing of Jeevan Bratis and yoga are also not important to build a Bharat but a householder can also help in this. Garhasthya is a foremost duty in Hindu Philosophy. Even many treatises disallow to be unmarried and allow to do service within the fold of the household work. These all that's why seems problematic and raises many questions further. Why Kendra is established? Do we really need it? If at all we need it, does it fulfill the mission of Vivekananda? There are even more unsolved questions. Why the Kendra now days penetrate more on the tribal areas? Is it to counter the missionaries or to hinduize the tribal? This is very clear to rational minded and the people of secular outlook to understand as what the Kendra wants. That's why the works of the Kendra should be thoroughly revised.

It is quite clear to us, in representations objectionable and irrational representation has comes forward so far. The difficulty in finding a genuine, objective, unbiased representation remains in a day dream. Further it gets strengthened by the sectarian representation and makes other more confused. Over a period of time an image has already been constructed and a false propaganda has been takes around Vivekananda. But it is a time now to see the great figure in open mind with a broad outlook. No one should stake their claim of copyright over the same to fulfill the narrow purpose, may be left,

right, center or institution. And finally we should not quote or represent somebody as long as we have not covered all primary writing of the person concern. Vivekananda needs to rescue him from any further distortion. However, the purpose of invoking Swami Vivekananda in the contemporary debate is not to serve as a voice of doom. Nor is there much point in going to him as an oracle. The importance of his life rests in how he grappled with various contradictory pulls. These were pressures generated led by the exigencies of India's struggle not only with colonialism but the multiple challenges of modernity. In this context Swami Vivekananda struggled simultaneously to retrieve the humanist strains of the tradition and socially and philosophically strengthen Hinduism for its encounter with the modern era.

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