



## A study on Representations of Swami Vivekananda by different schools of thought

Chandra Shekhar Hota

Dr Sikata Panda

### Abstract

The approach to do modern Indian Political thought is not only challenging but a task of thorough reasoning. In the Modern Indian Political thought of the contemporary time, we have failed to categorize many thinkers in their respective field. The space given to these thinkers are not sufficient enough either for the philosophy or the philosopher of Indian political thought. Thus the discourse of the Modern Indian Political thought need to be seen very carefully without any pre-occupation, prejudices or from a pre-determined position. It is not only evident for us that why India got confused with the upbringing of the best intellectual mind.<sup>1</sup>? These also further insulate that, why no Indian political thinker has got appreciation for their work. For instance, neither the economic theory of M.G Ranade or R.C. Dutt has been explored and appreciated properly. The failure in the engagement with Indian thought has generated 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 misinterpretations. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) is perphes one among them.

Key word- Vivekananda, Hindutva, Marxist, hagiographic

### Introduction

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 news paper of the west termed him as- "Cyclonic Swami". Somewhere other termed him as the evangelical's Hindu

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

missionary, who gave Hinduism a new dimension.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is a common perception that Vivekananda tried his at most 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.<sup>3</sup> The idea of Universal Symphony among different Religions is caught up well by Swami Vivekananda. But the capable Sisya of a great Guru was not being confined within the narrow line of sectarian thinking but he has a wider faith in entire humanity.

## The Context

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 need to See Vivekananda in a contextual manner.<sup>4</sup> It is on the framework of the time where Vivekananda groomed. It is evident that, Vivekananda was a Brahmo for some period of his life before coming to Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>5</sup> These leaning might help him to think of religious reforms of India. Thus in his later days he tried to reject all the dogmas of religion. Vivekananda's attitude towards the reform movement – 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. This time frame of Indian reformist too helped Vivekananda to understand the genesis of Indian society.<sup>6</sup>

The other context was the writing and the research of the oriental scholars. The writers of orient had many ill-informed ideas about India. Their representation of Indian society, culture, religion was not that real and authentic, which could grasp the true picture.<sup>7</sup> The indigenous voice was not their with the orientlist scholars. Thus the mission of Vivekananda to the West may be a retreat for the oriental scholars. It is a lesson for

<sup>2</sup> Shankari Prasad Basu, "Introduction to Vivekananda in Indian News Paper (1893-1902)", Calcutta, P-39

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

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

<sup>5</sup> See Sujata mins "*Vivekananda's idea of Religion*" in Dialogue, Vol-5 No-4, 2000, p. 38

<sup>6</sup> See G.M. Jagtiani, "Swami Vivekananda redeemer of our faith", Bombay, 1984 p. 29

<sup>7</sup> Fred Delmar, "*Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*, Rawat Publications, jaipur, 1996; p. 123.

orientalists 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 psychology of Colonialism was striving in the mind of Vivekananda. His mission in this regard is also a realization of domination and subjectivity of colonialism. It is remarkable that Vivekananda tries to re define the West's notion on India and Hinduism. He often in a letter describes that, India is looked upon by the world, "as three billions of earthworms' assembling and fighting against one another".<sup>8</sup>

Vivekananda was against the religious conversion. He describes that, conversion and service are two different things. He accused the missionary of converting the poor even in the odd time luring of all material prospers in the name of Service.<sup>9</sup> Thus Vivekananda has many duties to perform; he had to throw the evils of Hinduism 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, Hinduism, orientalism, Missionaries, orthodox and religious fanatics of 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Thus it is clear that, Vivekananda is a response to the situation of 19<sup>th</sup> century India which was a colonial India. His primary motive was to re-represent the novel idea of India, Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. Hopefully, situating Vivekananda in the framework of colonial India will-re-evaluate his idea and will rescue from the bad appropriation or miss-appropriation of our time. To read Vivekananda in the course of time and context is necessary to understand the idea of him in a better way. Thus Vivekananda should be seen in a larger, Socio-political-Cultural context of history.

When there is an urge to see Vivekananda in a holistic way beyond polemics and division, still there is no unanimity among scholars, where to situate Vivekananda. This difficulty in situating Vivekananda gives rise to multiple interpretations of him and his work. Some turns in to shallow admirer and some try to criticize Vivekananda. However, these divisions in the representation do not come from a single phenomenon. Even the writings and speeches of the Swami are many ways responsible for that. These are so <sup>10</sup>contradictory and complex at times that, true representation becomes a problem.

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

<sup>9</sup> CW – Vol-I, "Religion not the Crying need of India", p.20.

<sup>10</sup> See the "complete works of swami Vivekananda, vol- 2, Advaita Ashram", Calcutta, 2009, p-503( Hence after CW)

Needless to say, Vivekananda was not a scholar who wanted to publish himself in a scholarly banner but he was a preacher. And the preachers some time speak according to the audience. Surprisingly, the same Vivekananda says the same thing differently when it comes to different audiences. Take 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 same Vivekananda talks about the miseries of women when comes to Indian audience<sup>11</sup>. These contradictions make the reading of Vivekananda at times more complex. But some writers argue that the speaking 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. It is as consciousness, as intention and as transmission. but the speaking of Vivekananda has proved the scientificity of knowledge and performance which often demystify the existing trend of knowledge and science. He ultimately spoke about personal knowledge and freedom which can liberate human being from poverty and ignorance.<sup>12</sup>

This problem in reading Vivekananda gives rise to multiple representations. Scholars of Vivekananda are not agreeing with single set of argument on Vivekananda but they differ vehemently from each other. This divide in Vivekananda scholarship makes a part of the academic pursuit vulnerable and further gives rise to the distortion of the philosopher by various schools. Moreover, all schools of representation do not necessarily portray a distorted picture but their scholarship provides some insight to the study also. The differences among scholars, so succinctly, some time 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 does 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 nationalistic spirit. Evaluation of various representations and understanding of the Vivekananda 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.

---

<sup>11</sup> CW- VOL-3- P-505

<sup>12</sup> Parsasarathy banerjee, "Science and polity in the writings of Swami Vivekananda", Journal of Human values, 2007, p-135



## 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.

### Hagiographic Literature

The devotee literature which span over to various domain of society, picturises Vivekananda as an extraordinary figure. The publications of Sri Ramakrishna mission especially endorse this idea. For them, Vivekananda was a living 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 writing 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 on Swami Vivekananda. Even one could not reject "Prabuddha Bharata" and "Vedanta Kesari" two magazine by Advaita Ashram and Chennai ashram of Ramakrishna mission. So it can envision us to know the life and context of Swami Vivekananda. However the devotee representation of Vivekananda is not complete, as it hardly possesses the criticality. Even Sister Nivedita goes on to argue, 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, physically and economically.<sup>13</sup> What I am trying to argue here is that, Vivekananda scholarship must be read as concerted reaction to various contexts. Such devotee account of hermeneutic academic is largely available; most of them are uncritical and loaded with reverential tone of hagiographers. However, scholars being 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.<sup>14</sup> 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

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

<sup>14</sup> Rajgopal Chattopadhyaya, "Swami Vivekananda in India: A Corrective biography". Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 1999, pp 359-364

nuanced representation. After all Vivekananda can not be seen either as a superhuman saint or only as a man. Thus a look at the critical literature on him helps in understanding the complexity and contribution of him to the knowledge discourse. But it is surprising that, the critical literatures are not that critical of Vivekananda or his philosophy in total. Rather it is an independent evaluation. This independent evaluation seemingly helps, giving an objective interpretation of Vivekananda. There are many scholars, who believe in this school. They neither provide a concrete critique to Vivekananda's philosophy nor do they reject it or praise. 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 also debate and dialogue 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 of course 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 in the way they read.

### **Spiritual Vivekananda**

Ordaining the idea of religious, scholars think him 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<sup>15</sup> the idea to see Vivekananda as spiritual hero of India comes from his idea of Vedanta, which trace its roots from Vedic hymns to 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, what is called in one word- "Maya".<sup>16</sup> So this spiritualization, however not keeping 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 endorse the spiritualization of India. Religion, for Vivekananda was an embodiment of spiritualism, which dwells in the inner part not in the outer congruence.<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> 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. This four teach human being very basics of life and make human being spiritually awaken. Thus philosophy for Vivekananda is central to the philosophy of life. It produced four key words, Abhaya, Asanga, Ahinsa and Ananda.<sup>19</sup> 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 the Vivekananda a spiritual guru, a true philosopher and a profound Vedanta scholar.

<sup>15</sup> See AMiya Kumar Majumdar, "Understanding Vivekananda", Sanskriti Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta, 1972, p.33.

<sup>16</sup> See William Halbfass, "Practical Vedanta, in *Vasudha Dalmia and von stientencron(ed)*", Hinduism A Reader, Oxford, New York, 2007 pp- 170-180

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

<sup>18</sup> Badri Nath Chaturvedi, "Swami Vivekananda : the Living Vedanta", Penguin, New Delhi, 2006, p-13

<sup>19</sup> See for detail the introduction of Amiya Prasad Sen, "The indispensable Vivekananda", Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2006

## Religious Vivekananda

However, beside this philosophic representation, there are many representations are being made 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 had 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 following and finally, it possess the idea like, tolerance and acceptance.<sup>20</sup> 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 increasing the characterizing people or nation. For him, religion should be practical use of society but could not be dragged out to the common place of expectation.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> This idea of Vivekananda, argue many scholars, makes him truly secular. For them, 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

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

<sup>21</sup> Amiya Sen, "Swami Vivekananda", oxford University press, New Delhi, 2000, pp 18 – 19

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



goal in order to attain the desire level of religiosity.<sup>23</sup> 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. The same Vivekananda said, I am ready to go to Mosque of Mohammed, Christian Church.....and want to enlighten the heart of all human being.<sup>24</sup> Where scholars believed that, Vivekananda'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.<sup>25</sup> 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 19<sup>TH</sup> century India.<sup>26</sup> 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 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.<sup>27</sup> However, eminent Vivekananda scholars do not want to see Vivekananda as simply as a revivalist or a constructor of neo-Hinduism.

---

<sup>23</sup> Jayanti Jagatadeb, "*The sacred and the secular: A Study in the philosophy of Vivekananda*", Upagupta Publisher, Berhempore, Orissa, 1991, PP-3-8

<sup>24</sup> Nema Sadhan Bose, "*Swami Vivekananda and the challenges to fundamentalism*", in William Radice(ed), *Swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism*, Oxford, Delhi, 1998

<sup>25</sup> 25. Bimal Prasad, "*An Anthology on Swami Vivekananda*", Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994 pp-2-14

<sup>26</sup> Amiya P Sen. "*Hindu Revivalism in Bengal 1872-1905*, Oxford, New Delhi, 1993

<sup>27</sup> Tapan Raychaudhary, "*Swami Vivekananda construction of Hinduism*", in William Radice, *swami Vivekananda and the modernization of Hinduism*. Oxford, 1998

### Vivekananda and Other Faith

But for them, he was greatly influenced by various other cultures and religions. This in a way shape and sharpen the inner contradiction 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.<sup>28</sup> Like the theosophists, many scholars trace the roots of Vivekananda's educational background, which was mostly anglicized. This makes them to come to the conclusion that, Vivekananda's view on Christianity is 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.<sup>29</sup> 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 wholly 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.<sup>30</sup> 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 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.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> William W. Emilsen, "*Vivekananda and theosophists*", Journal of Indian History, vol-lxiii, April-Dec- 1984, Part-1-3, pp- 199-216

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

<sup>30</sup> Brian A Hatcher, "*Swami in the wonderland : Vivekananda's Eclectic Hermeneutics*", in Eclecticism and modern Hindu discourse, Oxford, New York, 1999 p-47

<sup>31</sup> Torkel Breke, "*Conceptual Foundation of Missionary Hinduism*", Journal of Religious History, Vol-23, No-2, June-1999 pp- 203-214

### **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's project, many authors argue. As a path finder of neo- Hinduism, Vivekananda most of the time trace 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.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, this understanding has also suffered by rifts, as some points out, Vivekananda encountered west and vice versa. The scholar of the first school 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 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 other<sup>33</sup>. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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. On the other hand the use if Indian spiritualism as a counter to materialism helped in forming an authentic Indian identity and later resulted in Indian

<sup>32</sup> William Halbfass, "India and Europe, an Essay of Understanding", State University of New York, 1988, pp 216-246

<sup>33</sup> 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)

independence.<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

### **Nationalist Vivekananda**

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 nationalism<sup>37</sup>. 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”<sup>38</sup> for years, within the short span of his life, he played a role of an

<sup>34</sup> 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

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

<sup>36</sup> 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

<sup>37</sup> See Jyotirmaya sharma “*Hindutva : exploration of the idea of Hindu nationalism in India*”, penguin Viking, 2003, p -184

<sup>38</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, “*The Discovery of India*”, Doubleday and co, New York: 1960 pp-253, 256



itinerant prophet of renascent 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, 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.<sup>39</sup> 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,

<sup>39</sup> 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

which can put India in equal footing. No one should be a teacher or students but everyone will be friends. This egalitarian tendency and positive self assertion was probably the nationalism Vivekananda wanted. As a critique of India<sup>40</sup> 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 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.<sup>41</sup> Thus it is quite evident that the idea of Vivekananda on nationalism has multiple shades. Each 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

---

<sup>40</sup> See for detail the introduction of Amiya Prasad Sen., "*The indispensable Vivekananda*", Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2006 pp14-16

<sup>41</sup> See for detail Samita Basu, "*Religious Revivalism as Nationalist Discourse : Swami Vivekananda and its construction of New Hinduism in Nineteen century Benga'l*", Oxford, New Delhi, 2002 p121

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 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> Rightly or wrongly, 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

<sup>42</sup> 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.

<sup>43</sup> V. Brodov, "*Indian philosophy at modern time*" s, Progress publishers, Moscow, 1984

vivekananda 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.<sup>44</sup> 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 oneness<sup>45</sup>. 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.<sup>46</sup> 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 power<sup>47</sup>. 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 of western influence in India after the 1857 war of independence.<sup>48</sup> Again responding to Arun Sourie, who called Vivekananda as the new Darling of communists and secularists, Bardhan proves the

<sup>44</sup> Binoy K Roy, "*socio political Vies of Vivekananda*", peoples publishing House, New Delhi, 2008, pp 1-24

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, page 54

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p- 63

<sup>47</sup> Dinanath Mishra, Looking at Vivekananda, OBP, February 5, 1993

<sup>48</sup> CPM against the Debate on Hindu Ethos, Hindustan Times, 19 January 1999



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 youth<sup>49</sup>. 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 India<sup>50</sup>. 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 propogated 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 Brahmamaya (Brahma all around) world never falling in the narrow margin of discrimination. This egalitarian tendency of Vedanta is more fascinating both for philosophy and for the philosophy of life.<sup>51</sup> (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"<sup>52</sup>. The above

<sup>49</sup> Roy Bhaskar, Left Turns to Vivekananda, Times of India, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 p-16

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

<sup>51</sup> However this observation is personally mine, neither Rao nor Dasgupta is responsible for this. .

<sup>52</sup> 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

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 Study 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. I think, all these happen 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 14<sup>th</sup> is observed as the national youth day. But the question arises, are not we over representing the personality of Vivekananda. An 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 a ordinary human being and for Vivekananda, he never read any treatise twice in his life<sup>53</sup>. 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 even could not know as he was in deep yogic exercise. Often it is said that, Vivekananda roars chanting Shivoham, Shivoham all the time. When in yoga a snake came to his room, gradually reached to Vivekananda's head, curled it and suddenly

<sup>53</sup> Apurba Ranjan Roy, Swami Vivekananda( in Orya), Friend publications, Cuttack,2003 pp 21-33

disappears.<sup>54</sup> 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 master<sup>55</sup> 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 Immortality<sup>56</sup>. 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 Vivekananda from America as like, “Bahuda Bijaya<sup>57</sup>.” For mohanty, it was a victory of Indian people, Indian Spiritualism, culture, religion and ethos of India<sup>58</sup>. 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 I refute 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. Souribandhu Kar and Chittaranjan Das also written various books on Vivekananda. Souribandhu has given a socialist perspective whereas Das has portrayed Vivekananda as a different man rarely born on earth.

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

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, page no-19

<sup>56</sup> Manoj Kumar Mahapatra, “*Bidrohi Sannyasi, Swami Vivekananda Jibani o Darsana*”( In Oriya), New Age Publication, Cuttack, 2008 pp-455-464

<sup>57</sup> 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.

<sup>58</sup> Sarat Kumar Mohanty, “*Chhatrapati Vivekananda*”, Agraduta Publication, Cuttack, 2008

### **Some Other Representations on Vivekananda**

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 a 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 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 politics<sup>59</sup>. 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

---

<sup>59</sup> 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



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 Brahmagyana. So for Vivekananda Gyana comes in a later stage and not mediated by reason.<sup>60</sup> 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 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 effort<sup>61</sup>.

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.

---

<sup>60</sup> 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

<sup>61</sup> 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

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

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 society<sup>62</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The above discussions show that, there are multiple representations of Vivekananda. The disagreement among scholars however produced more confusion than unanimity. This lack of a holistic approach to analyze Vivekananda has created many academic troubles. These troubles are rather more serious and thought provoking, which enables scholars to do more academic exercise on Vivekananda. Understanding of Vivekananda, with out being 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.

Chandra Shekhar Hota is a Research Scholar in the School of Political Science Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur

Dr Sikata Panda is an Associate Professor in the school of Political Science Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur.

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