THE CONTRIBUTION OF MODERN THINKERS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY WITH A SPECIALREFERENCE TO DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN – A STUDY

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SYNOPSIS

Indian philosophical schools have developed some of the finest and acclaimed philosophers whose understanding on the quest for knowledge on ancient literature paved way for the identity of Indian philosophy to the world. Though the Vedic scriptures with very ancient origin they have hidden potential of knowledge which can be still contemplated be it metaphysics, epistemology, logic and all other elements even today. Though it belongs to the Hindu religion as their scriptures, the literary works and people who have written polemics and advocated them are more inclined towards search and practical realization of the ultimate reality or the truth rather than God alone. However only in modern age, many thinkers evolved in India by whose work the Indian philosophy was well conceived by the west and in order to explicate its positions in reply to western philosophers. They also made the west to look at their works to learn the undiscovered dimensions with appropriate reply to their questions.

In this present postmodern world, there arises a question whether Philosophizing has stopped or diluted? Because unlike serious enquiry vested on various existential realities both in west and east before modern era, where many schools of thoughts advocated different perspectives with a continuous discourse on its proof through many thinkers, the present day has turned its face towards quest for humanity which is engulfed by more advanced technological innovations. These advancements have made human lives to leave the humanity and generated a vacuum in the spiritual and philosophical realm with nothing noteworthy to add.
However the thinkers who contributed to Philosophy after the modernism touched upon more on human life conditions in the society in the backdrop of morality, values, spirituality and humanistic thought. This study tries to evolve the directions of the modern thinkers with special reference to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and find out what he has offered to take Indian Philosophical thought for the future. An analysis of the works of modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in relevance to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has been set for this study.

The modern thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo’s approach on human beings and their freedom of life and realization of the life on this earth points out the need for a philosophical outlook on man’s life rather than a metaphysical quest for truth and reality again. This shift in the mindset gave rise to a new thinking pattern in the minds of these two great people who dedicated their lives and their works towards the humankind. Soon after his first visit to America, Vivekananda’s focus turned in to religious consciousness of Indian masses by doing away with sectoral differences within Hinduism and to make them practice Vedanta in their life by establishing Ramakrishna Mission. The strong exponent of Hinduism Swami Vivekananda emphasizes its existence “Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world”. He emerges himself from Hinduism and from there his philosophy to the world.

Sri Aurobindo’s perception towards mankind realized that the humans are not the end of this world as there is possibility of a higher or another being or species may arise in the time of the world. However he had the urge to enlighten the people that they could ascend beyond their limiting circumstances and the world in their spirituality. He worked on the consciousness of human kind and believed that, the supramental abilities could make the life better to achieve the highest good. Further he sees that when the human life submits itself to the divine force which is God the growth of the human being in this world can happen. The
individual needs to use the potential power of divine in order to realize its infinite potential. With this he has to submit himself to the divine power and realize his existence in the divine to carry out its will. Sri Aurobindo not only advocates the divine power and its existence but also shows the means to experience it through integral yoga which is his unique philosophy.

While both the thinkers Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo pondered over the divine good which will give the ultimate relief from the worldly bondage for every human being and the final path of one’s own life in this world, Dr. Radhakrishnan philosophy extends up to a great level of thoughts on various fields such as humanism, ethics, social & political philosophy and metaphysics. However his Philosophy of life was idealism and he emphasized that the human life has a purpose, and different ideals and ethical and moral values work as dynamic forces for giving the right direction towards life. This direction is set towards life goals and the force guides them to achieve those life goals. The human beings inherent thirst for God, truth, passion for perfection, longing for goodness, aesthetic thirst and aspirations only exhibit the divine nature thus proving that the positive energy between the human and divine.

Also on the other hand Dr. Radhakrishnan’s approach to Indian Philosophy to the world was to enlighten the mass about the origin of Hinduism in India and structuring the emergence of its philosophical thought through two major paths both orthodox and heterodox systems. His extraordinary works on Indian philosophy and his immense desire for groping the past to elicit what Indian philosophy has to offer to the world produced a new facelift to Indian philosophy. This study is an attempt to find out his systematic approach towards Indian Philosophy and his contribution to the world in the light of post modern world. On this background it is imperative to explore the extraordinary and unique ideologies, he clarifies on the life of human beings from Hindu system that, “Karma literally means action, deed. All acts produce their effects which are
recorded both in the organism and the environment. Their physical effects may be short-lived but their moral effects (samskara) are worked into the character of the self. Every single thought, word and deed enters into the living chain of causes which makes us what we are.” His subtle thought on human behaviorism, his character of self records the significance of human life on the earth. In this context there is a need for proper direction for the human beings to step into the future. This direction can be obtained from the scriptures and various works of thinkers evolved during the early age which holds relevance to human life. Thus a thorough study is needed to take up the ideals of the thinkers proposed in this study and find out their appropriateness to fit into the contemporary as well as future generations thus the human life travels through the contour set by them.

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The intense contemplation of philosophical thoughts during the modern philosophical period which is otherwise known as contemporary era has produced number of philosophers in western world. Meanwhile in the eastern countries especially Indian Philosophy produced notable thinkers who paved way for a new dimension in Philosophy giving much emphasis on education, spiritualism and humanist thought. Swami Vivekananda while foreseeing the future of India said, “The only way to bring about the leveling of caste is to, appropriate the culture, the education which is the strength of the higher caste”. His call for the downtrodden, oppressed community of India to rise up to the future is to raise themselves from the slavery of casteism. He urges the so called marginalized and lower caste people to embrace the culture which the high caste enjoy and get educated. This evolution of thought evolved out of Vedic practices and thought gave Vivekananda to appeal to the masses to get enlightened by education. He also proclaimed the exclusivity has gone out of India due to the British rule even during the time of Moghal rule people were brought under one rule depriving the exclusivist privileges. The various practical issues which oppress the human
community agonized a section on one end which never to rise up. So, Vivekananda summoned the Indian people, “So give up being slave. For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote – this, our great Mother India”. Addressing the life issues through the spiritual principles of Hinduism was Vivekananda’s way of preaching the world.

Dr. Radhakrishnan on the other hand gives an all round picture of human life based on Indian Philosophical spiritualism and his idealistic view which promotes humanism and its fulfillment of ideals in life. His educational thought extensively travels from the methodology of study, curriculum, method teaching and all the elements therein to the role of a teacher. Hence the thought process of these modern thinkers have always pointed towards the development of human beings both on the development of knowledge level which improves the society and spiritual development which will take them to the higher attainable level in life. However, the philosophizing exercise appears to diminish in this post modern world as the scientific and technological revolution has taken over the life of people whom have started to depend on them for everything thus slowly withdrawing from the urge to think.

At this juncture it is very much essential to kindle the minds of people with what already have been established and structured to be understood by the modern thinkers. India being the culturally and traditionally rich country in its spiritualism has plenty of vital elements to offer for the mass which have been beautifully worked out by modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Radhakrishnan that needs to be made available to the mass thorough research. Also the question raised on whether the core philosophical works of these thinkers have linear connection between them in order to establish the essence of Indian philosophical thought in this home land or of independent in nature and thought.
But, the intense onset of technology during the 21st century has drastically changed the lifestyle of this contemporary world which is heading towards a virtual world and reality. The virtual reality is not a metaphysical entity rather an extension of human’s convenient space in the real world. While men are busy with interacting and exchanging thought through this virtual world there is a shift in the pattern of thinking mind which has started to lean on the technology for everything. Will this pave way for a healthy living conditions in the future needs to be questioned. This analysis will greatly help in understanding the mind shift pattern that has emerged in the current century and the need to look back at the works of great Indian tradition which has a ready reckoner at hand to direct us which way the humanity should drive forth. If the contemporary world is critically analyzed with these modern philosophers’ work, it would fetch a new dimension of thought to refresh the minds of people of this present day society.

**SOURCES OF THE STUDY**

The sources for the study are Dr. Radhakrishnan’s works which include his original writings on Indian Philosophy which include two volumes of Indian Philosophy – Vol I & Vol – II, Religion, Culture and Education. His works also include Sankara’s commentary “Brahma Sutra” which he translated with his notes in the same name and Bhagavadgita whose original work in Sanskrit was translated by Radhakrishnan for the general reader with notes. The original works of other modern thinkers taken for this study is Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda for referential analysis. The secondary sources are the relevant books, articles, views and comments which appeared in Journals, Magazines with respect to Dr. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study intends to explore the modern thinkers’ contribution to the contemporary society and its relevance through the works of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who has introduced Indian Philosophy to the world.

1. The relevance of the existing philosophical thoughts of modern thinkers with respect to Dr. Radhakrishnan’s work to the contemporary society. His underlying principles in all his works and a comprehensive synthesis of his views on spiritualism, philosophy and education.

2. To study the contemporary thinkers Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo’s philosophies and find out the thought process of these eminent thinkers towards Indian society and their philosophical insights in alignment with Dr. Radhakrishnan’s thought.

3. A study of Dr. Radhakrishnan’s philosophy and its significance to the modern day society and what it offers to Indian society through his core ideas.

4. A study of Dr. Radhakrishnan’s other works and its reflection on contemporary society as his interest did not stop with his works on Religion, Philosophy, Education but being a statesman had political perspectives on the globe which have been brought out to the light of society.

5. An in depth study of development of modern thinkers’ philosophy and an analysis of Dr. Radhakrishnan’s works in the light of modern thinkers.

AIM OF THE STUDY

An academician cum statesman did content with a mediocre journey of life. But the early challenges in life and the circumstances took him to the arena of philosophy and subsequently the politics made him to bring forth his ideas which were incubating for so long through his works. Hence this study is aimed at analyzing his contribution on various fields, his understanding of philosophy,
religion, humanity, human life which includes ideals, ethics and morals, life goals, education, society, politics and other ideas. This analysis will help the scholars further contemplate on the ideas put forwarded and discussed for further contemplation and research. The works of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo which were taken for referential purpose of this study also would enhance the research in parallel to Dr Radhakrishnan’s works whose contribution to the contemporary society can be ascertained.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the relevance of the existing philosophical thoughts of modern thinkers with respect to Dr. Radhakrishnan’s work to the contemporary society. He has written many books and the extent to which the thoughts analyzed towards the contemporary society has been set. The comparison of his works with the post modern thinkers in the light of the objective of the study requires prominent thinkers’ ideas and philosophies for the purpose of the study.

Dr. Radhakrishnan’s philosophy and its significance to the modern day society based on other two Indian thinkers Swami Vivekananda and Sri Arurobindo have been taken for the study to see how far they have contributing elements related to the society.

Dr. Radhakrishnan’s works and its reflection on contemporary society is studied and his ideals and interests towards the globe being a statesman during his life time. This has been observed from his compilation “Occasional Speeches and Writings”. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had been a,

a) Bridge between East and Western Philosophies
b) An renowned Vedantin
c) Apologetic supporter of Hindu tradition & faith and
d) A liberal and open minded personality who harmonized different faiths.
He is also one of India's most notable yet acclaimed scholars of Indian thought and philosophy. He has been referred as the bridge between the East and the West through his discourse on philosophical ideas on either side mutually complementing each other in terms of their thought and ideas. His affirmative works especially on Hindu religion on the background of Indian Philosophical traditions and Vedas which opened a new broad way to the western world to travel in to the Indian philosophical literature to find out the richness and knowledge revolution in Indian sub continent.

He is an exponent of Advaita Vedanta whose critical and in depth study gave a way into beautiful literary works on Indian Philosophy for the contemporaries to understand. Being an academician, his involvement in his higher education, his deep interest in upholding the religious faith of his mother land thus enumerated Hinduism towards "uninformed Western criticism" by his works. His point of contention in uniting the religion with humanity which is a global phenomenon as he said, “Religion and humanism are not opposites. Each needs the characteristic gifts and graces of the other”. His understanding on the thoughts and ideals of west be it Greek or Judaism, he has studied them thoroughly in order to give them a reply of clarity on Eastern religious background. His harmonizing efforts but not hurting or refuting the beliefs and thoughts of other religion show his maturity and clarity of mind.

The core study is based on Dr. Radhakrishnan and his works and also in depth study of development other prominent modern thinker’s limited to Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo being the contemporaries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A qualitative, analytical study of research is required very often in order to gauge the development of philosophical research and study. A constant research endeavour will elicit the newly evolved thoughts and new dimensions of
philosophy not only emerging new thoughts but existing systems advocated by many thinkers in the past. It is the endeavor of the researcher who is pondering over a problem to find appropriate answers from the works of thinkers whom he studies. The in-depth study involves a qualitative analysis of the works of the philosophers i.e. secondary data to bring about the conclusion and suitable findings. This thesis aims at fulfilling the defined objectives while adapting a simple style in order to help research scholars and students to understand its core content and findings through a systematic study of the works of the philosophers who have been selected for the research.

As this thesis is an in-depth analysis of a great philosopher of India has ever produced and who was also an internationally acclaimed scholar, a qualitative, descriptive and analytical method has been adopted to successfully complete this research.

**DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This Thesis “THE CONTRIBUTION OF MODERN THINKERS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNAN - A STUDY” for the award of the Ph.D., Degree covers the philosophical works of Dr. Radhakrishnan in particular. And also Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and their works for referential purpose and not for the core research.

**PLAN OF STUDY**

The study has been organized in to six chapters. A brief outline of the various chapters is as follows:

**Chapter – I – Introduction**

The first chapter gives the introductory remarks to Indian Philosophy and modern thinkers, need and justification of study, statement of problem, conceptual
meaning of terms, objectives of the study, scope of study, sources of data, limitation of study, delimitation sources, research methodology and organization of chapters. It also spells out the significance of the study and the important issues to be researched in the thesis.

**Chapter – II – Indian Philosophical Systems**

The second chapter analyses the Indian philosophical systems derived in the subcontinent and its implications on the Indian Philosophy. The fundamentals and origin of various philosophical thoughts and its religious nature in tune with the founders also brought out.

**Chapter – III – The contribution of modern thinker Swami Vivekananda to Indian Philosophy**

The third chapter elaborates the works of Swami Vivekananda and his philosophy. His thoughts vary from universal brotherhood, religion, education, ethics, nationalism and human social conditions. The importance of his thought in the light of contemporary society and its validity.

**Chapter – IV – The contribution of modern thinker Sri Aurobindo to Indian Philosophy**

The third chapter elaborates the works of Sri Aurobindo and his philosophy. His thoughts include his own philosophy integral yoga, involution & evolution, education, religion and society. The significance of his thoughts is discussed in the light of contemporary society and for its validity.
Chapter – V – The contribution of modern thinker with special reference to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan to Indian Philosophy

The fifth chapter discusses on Dr. Radhakrishnan’s philosophical ideas and its significance to the modern day society. He has varied fields of intense groping for truth which resulted in his conviction towards his own religion Hinduism through Vedic scriptures. His idealistic view influenced by Vedanta which is Sankara’s exposition on the supreme reality, theory of Atman, epistemology, ethics, karma and moksa towards mankind. His emphasis and importance on education and an all round development of humanity.

Chapter – VI – Conclusion

The sixth chapter consolidates the remarks and finding of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan along with a parallel analysis with Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo’s thought on various topics as discussed in the earlier chapters and what modern thinkers contributed to Indian philosophical systems.