CHAPTER VIII

THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION MOVEMENT

Most truly representative of the religious and spiritual genius of India is the Ramkrishna movement, which emerged, as a force to be reckoned with, in the second-half of the 19th century. The movement brought about that spiritual renaissance in the realm of Hindu religion and philosophy which resulted in a wide-spread national awakening manifesting itself in a patriotic feeling of pride in the great spiritual traditions of the country. Rightly it has been said, "Of all the religious movements that have sprung up in India in recent times, there is none so faithful to our past and so full of possibilities for the future, so rooted in our national consciousness, and yet so universal in its outlook, and therefore, none so thoroughly representative of the religious spirit of India, as the movement connected with the names of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda." 1

SRI RAMKRISHNA - THE PRECURSOR OF THE MOVEMENT

Behind this great movement of modern India stands the God-inspired personality of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa - one of the greatest spiritualists that the world has ever produced. In the whole history of Hinduism, he is invariably a remarkable personality. For, the spiritual experiences which he had had through his 'Sadhna' covered the whole field of Hinduism and not merely a segment of it. Although he had hardly any formal education to his credit, yet by the sheer dint of his ceaseless 'Sadhna', he traversed the whole world of religious experience,

1 - Sharma, D.S. - Hinduism through the Ages; p.125.
and confirmed by his own personal experiences the truths contained not
only in the Hindu religion but also in Islam and Christianity. And, as
a result of all this, he came to the conclusion that all religions are
the branches of the same tree, and that all, if devoutly followed, lead
to the same goal, that is, God. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan gives a very cogent
description of the personality of this great saint and mystic when he
says, "He is one of those rare beings in whom the flame of spiritual
life burns so brightly that all those who came near are able to share
the illumination and see the world new-born as on the first day. He is
an illustrious example of the mystical tradition which runs right through
the religious history of this country from the days of the Vedic Rishis."

HIS LIFE AND WORK

Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa, known as Gadadhar in his early year
was born in the year 1836, in Kamarpukur - a village in the Hooghly
district in West Bengal, in a poor orthodox Brahmin family. From his
very early years, he took little interest in secular education and showed
remarkable aptitude for spiritual subjects. His elder brother, therefore,
took him to Calcutta, at the age of seventeen, to help him in his duties
as a family-priest in the Kali-temple at Dakshineshwar on the banks of
the Ganges, four miles north of Calcutta.

It was in this temple of Kali that the spiritual career of
Sri Ramkrishna started. Formal worship of the Goddess could not satisfy
his spiritual hunger. He soon plunged himself into the contemplation of
the Divine Mother in total forgetfulness of his earthly existence. For
twelve years he remained absorbed, with astonishing steadfastness, in
his 'Sadhana' to realise God. There was so much pathos, so much agony in

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1 - Introduction to the Cultural Heritage of India; p.27.
his yearnings, arising from the innermost recesses of his heart, for the vision of the Mother Divine (Kali) that even the stoniest of hearts melted with compassion and pity for him. With single-minded devotion, he prayed and prayed to Her to bless him with Her real vision. To gain this spiritual object, he subjected himself to all sorts of physical sufferings and continence. He would go out alone into the neighbouring jungle, now called Panchavati, and meditate there for hours under an 'amalaka' tree, weeping incessantly and profusely, so that his eyes were swollen when he returned to the temple at day-break. In moments of intense spiritual longing, he would cry like a child and rub his face against the ground in misery.

His prayers were at last heard by the Goddess, as, after some months of this intense 'Sadhana', the first flash of illumination came to him and he was blessed with the vision of the Mother. This happened when, unable to bear the separation any longer, he became so dejected and desperate that he was at the point of putting an end to his life. It is interesting to learn how the illumination came to him at that great moment of crisis, in his own words:

"I could not bear the separation any longer; life did not seem worth-living. Suddenly, my eyes fell on the sword that was kept in the Mother's temple. Determined to put an end to my life, I jumped up like a mad man and seized it, when, suddenly, the blessed 'Mother' revealed Herself to me and I fell unconscious on the floor. What happened after that externally, or how that day or the next passed, I do not know, but within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother."^{1}

^{1} - Sharma, D.S. - (quoted by) - op. cit; p. 128.
The first vision of the Divine Mother did not, however, satisfy his spiritual hunger. It rather encouraged him to take a deeper plunge into the ocean of spiritual experiences. With uncommon perseverance, he practised, one after the other, all the principal faiths of the Hindu religion. His conduct became more and more queer. People grew apprehensive lest he had been struck by mental derangement. But he did not care a whit for the world and pressed on with his spiritual quest with redoubled zest and determination. He practised 'Hatha Yoga' and would go to the cremation ground and sit there naked for hours together in meditation. Next, he practised 'Tantric Sadhana' under the guidance of a venerable woman who was a great 'Yogini' and a Vaisnavite devotee. She put him through all the sixty-four principal 'Tantra' books. These 'Yogic' forms of discipline could not, however, satisfy him. He, therefore, identified himself with Hanumana, and had the vision of Sita and Rama; he further identified himself with Radha and had the vision of Krishna. These visions further added to his spiritual experience and brought into a state of spiritual ecstasy.

Soon afterwards, Sri Ramkrishna came in contact with an itinerant monk, called Totapari, who introduced him to the philosophy of 'Adaiyata'. On the very first day, when he practised 'Adaiyata Sadhana', he went into a state of 'samadhi' and remained in that state for three days, completely oblivious of the world. Under the guidance of his new master, he learnt and practised Vedanta for about a year, with the result that now he became also a 'Gyani', besides being a 'Bhakta' already. When his master left him, Sri Ramkrishna again went into a state of Samadhi, this time for an unusually long period of six months. During the whole of this period, he remained practically dead to the world, unconscious of day or night. His body would have surely perished but
for the kindness of a monk who used to press some food down his throat whenever he saw any sign of consciousness returning to him. After six months had passed in this way, he returned to the plane of relative consciousness, and gradually recovered and became a normal man.

The knowledge and practice of 'Adaivta' philosophy exercised a profound influence on the spirituality of Sri Ramkrishna. It broadened his mind by making him realise God as a formless Absolute and led him to believe in the oneness of all religions. He, therefore, made up his mind to realise God through the medium of other religions. He started living like a Mohammedan, going to the mosque and saying his 'namaz' regularly. And, as he tells us, after three days, he realized the goal, that is, he had a vision of the Prophet. Then he gave his heart to Bible and Christianity and had a vision of Jesus Christ, as he further tells us.

Thus the spiritual Sadhana of Sri Ramkrishna was complete by 1868, and thenceforth we find him returning to the ways of normal men and visiting the holy places of India, meeting people and exchanging his experiences with them. He also came into contact with the Brahma-Samaj leaders, and, despite his disagreement with them on many points, his relations with them, particularly with Keshab Chandra Sen, remained very cordial.

Towards the closing part of his life, a keen sense of social consciousness dawned upon the mind of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa. He strongly felt that his mission in life was to awaken people from their spiritual slumber and to reveal to them the mysteries of God, of which he had himself gained ample experience through his long spiritual 'Sadhana'. To fulfil this mission, he, from 1879 to 1886 (the year of his death), gathered around him a band of devoted and promising disciples, trained them with the love of a mother, and entrusted them with the task of
carrying his message far and wide.

This, in brief, was the life of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, full of intense spiritual yearnings, vicissitudes and experiences. It is worthy of note that his was not the life of a pedant who merely lives in a world of metaphysical subtleties and hair-splitting arguments regarding God, but of a true mystic who drinks deep at the fountain of spiritual nectar, through his own unremitting 'Tapas' and 'Sadhana'. Verily, the life of this great man symbolizes the variety of processes open to man for his spiritual realisations through his own efforts.

The work and achievements of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, as a spiritual guide and benefactor of mankind, may be summarised as under, in the form of conclusions he reached as a result of his personal experiences:

(i) Realisation of God, which is the essence of all religions, should take precedence over all mundane pursuits.

(ii) All religions are paths that lead to the same goal, that is, God; hence quarrels among the followers of different religions are meaningless and futile.

(iii) Both 'Gyan' and 'Bhakti' lead to the realization of God, the latter is to be preferred, especially in this materialistic age, as the former requires a very high degree of purity and self-control.

(iv) Realisation of God is a matter of personal experience to be had from intense and earnest yearnings for Him, and not of mental gymnasium and hair-splitting arguments in the realm of religion and philosophy.

(v) Renunciation is necessary for spiritual realisation. This should be only internal in the case of a householder, and
both external and internal in the case of a 'Sanyasi'.

(vi) It is wrong to condemn idolatry or image-worship as a frivolous superstition. If men like Shankara and Chaitanya (and Sri Ramkrishna himself) could realise God through image-worship, there may be millions who will find it equally helpful in their spiritual endeavours. If a man finds image-worship helpful, he should resort to it by all means; and if, on the other hand, he feels it is a hindrance in his way, it is up to him to drop it for good. Image-worship is only a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

(vii) A true spiritualist - seeker after Truth or God - should be imbued with a keen sense of social service, that is, he should use his spiritual experiences for the benefit of mankind by carrying his message of spiritualism to the world at large.

HIS ILLUSTRIOUS DISCIPLE - SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

As stated above, towards the closing part of Sri Ramkrishna's life, a brilliant galaxy of young men gathered round him. He inspired them with the ideals of renunciation and service, and formed them into a sort of spiritual fraternity to carry his spiritual message to every nook and corner of the world. Among these young men he found one, Narendra Nath Dutta, (later called Swami Vivekananda), especially suited for this purpose. While lying seriously ill, shortly before his demise, he entrusted the whole group to him, saying, "I leave them into your care. See that they practise spiritual exercises and do not return home."¹ No doubt, Narendra Nath Dutta, by his subsequent work, proved worthy of the confidence which his master had reposed in him.

¹ - Swami Tejsananda (quoted by) - The Ramkrishna Movement; p.12.
A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH

Swami Vivekananda, originally known as Narendra Nath Dutta, was born at Calcutta, in 1863. Under the intelligent guidance of his father, Vishwanath Dutta, who was a successful attorney-at-law in the High Court of Calcutta, he received his education in the English schools and colleges of that city. As a student, he had a very gay and vivacious nature. He took great delight in games and sports and was especially good at boxing and wrestling, in swimming and riding. On the intellectual side also, he showed remarkable talents. He evinced great interest in the study of Western literature and philosophy and soon became conversant with the contemporary philosophy of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. He was a favourite student of his teachers and Mr. Hastie, the Principal of the College, called him 'a genius'. The study of Western sciences and philosophy broadened his intellectual horizon and raised a tumult of scepticism in his mind. He became at one time a member of the Brahma Samaj to fulfil his spiritual hunger, but it could not bring him the desired mental peace and spiritual solace.

In his flaming desire to know the Truth, he, therefore, went from person to person and from society to society, till at last he came face to face with the saint of Dakshineshwar, Sri Ramkrishna. In the very first meeting, he was carried off his feet by the spiritual magnetism of the great saint. The meeting, in fact, proved a turning point in his life, for he decided to become his disciple and to devote all his energy in the realization of Truth, under his spiritual guidance. As his illumination grew from week to week, his master began to look upon him as his spiritual heir and, at last, a few days before his death, he actually called him to his bedside and explicitly entrusted him with the task of keeping the fire of spiritualism, lit by him, ablaze after him,
saying, "Oh, Naren, today I have given you my all and have become a fakir, a penniless beggar. By the force of power transmitted by me, great things will be done by you; only after that will you go to whence you came."¹

His worthy disciple did his best to carry on the work of his great master. He preached the truths of Vedant, as testified in the experiences of his master, in America, in Europe and in India, with unprecedented zeal. Through him the spiritual traditions of India came to light again, gaining attraction and recognition far and wide. "Swami Vivekananda did for the gospel of Sri Ramkrishna some thing similar to what St. Paul did for the gospel of Christ."²

Soon after the death of his master, Narendra Nath, organised his brother-disciples as monks of the Ramkrishna Order and started the first monastery (Math) of the Order at Baranagar, on the 19th October, 1886. After that, for about five years, he wandered all over India, often facing starvation and sometimes also danger to his life. Like a true Sanyasin, he turned his back upon all physical comforts and went from one place to another, mostly on foot, sometimes begging his food and at times even starving till some kindly soul offered him something to eat.

While sojourning at Khandwa, in the course of his wanderings, he heard for the first time that a Parliament of Religion was going to be held at Chicago, in America, in 1893. Pursuaded by his followers, who collected subscriptions for his voyage to America, he decided to participate in the Parliament, as a representative of the Hindu religion. It was at this time that he took his new name, Swami Vivekananda. In the very first session of the Parliament, held on 11th September, 1893,

¹ - Sharma, D.S. (quoted by) - op. cit; pp.152-153.
² - Ibid; p.148.
he created a great impression by his speech, which, starting with, "Sisters and Brothers of America", struck the note of universal toleration based on the cardinal Vedantic belief that all religions are pathways to the same goal - realisation of God. He spoke on several occasions in the Parliament and soon made his mark as a true representative of the Hindu religion. Thus did the obscure monk of India take the world by surprise, emerging in a flash, as it were, as a world-figure. For some years, he stayed in America, propagating the Vedantic philosophy by his incessant tours, talks, lectures, addresses and regular classes. From there he occasionally paid short visits to England and did the same type of work there also.

When after about five years of glorious work abroad, Swami Vivekananda returned to India, the reception that was given to him was unprecedented. The same monk who, before sailing for America, had wandered all over the country for years together unnoticed and unhonoured, was now the veritable hero of the land, for his triumph abroad was viewed by his countrymen as the triumph of the Indian culture.

HIS HUMANISTIC SPIRITUALISM AND SERVICE- MOTTO
AS A PATRIOT-MONK

The most charming note in the spiritualism of Swami Vivekananda was its humanism. Renunciation, to him, did not mean seeking spiritual salvation for the self in an isolated manner. "If you want to find God, serve man,"¹ he said. He realised full well that the crying need of the teeming millions of India was not religion but bread. While speaking in the Parliament of World-Religions at America, he boldly declared "They ask us for bread but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics."² This intense humanism is the

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1 - Swami Vivekananda - My Life and Mission; p.34.
2 - Sharma D., op.cit; pp.155-156.
all-pervading note of Swami Vivekanand's spiritualism.

While wandering about in the country for about five years preceding his departure for America, the Swami had gone from village to village, and had seen with his own eyes the heart-rending misery and poverty of the Indian masses. His heart had melted and cried with sympathy for them, and, by a sudden impulse, therefore, he resolved, while sitting in profound meditation on a sea-girt rock at Kanyakumari, to consecrate himself to the service of the teeming millions of India. This proved a turning point in his career, for he was thenceforth transformed into a patriot-monk, devoted heart and soul to the cause of the Indian masses. Like a true patriot, imbued with the spirit of national service, he said, "So long as even a single dog in my country is without food, my whole religion will be to feed it."¹

FOUNDING OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION BY HIM IN 1897

Fired with such an intense patriotic fervour, Swami Vivekanand, shortly after his return from America, founded an association under the name of Ramkrishna Mission, on the 1st of May, 1897. This marked the consummation of his long-cherished desire to make the Ramkrishna movement a potent tool of social reform and national service. The mission was got registered in 1909, under the Act XXI of 1860 of the Governor General of India-in-Council, and its management was vested in a Governing Body consisting of the Trustees of the Belur Math.

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE MISSION

In the memorandum of the Ramkrishna Mission, the following are stated to be its aims and objects:—

¹ - Swami Vivekananda - op.cit., p.34.
(i) "To impart and promote the study of arts, sciences and industries.

(ii) To train teachers in all branches of knowledge, mentioned above, and to enable them to reach the masses.

(iii) To carry on educational work among the masses.

(iv) To establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid and the afflicted, famine-relief-work, and other educational and charitable works and institutions of a like nature.

(v) To print and publish, and to sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.

(vi) To carry on other works which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with, and calculated directly or indirectly to promote, any of the before-mentioned aims."

ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND ORGANISATION

The aims and objects of the Mission, quoted above, are fairly revealing of its nature and scope. Instead of being confined to spirituality alone, it is, in fact, a very broad and comprehensive movement, wedded to the great task of national regeneration. It seeks to help and uplift the Indian masses in a true philanthropic spirit. The patriotic vision of Swami Vivekananda embraced in its comprehensive sweep almost all the major problems of Indian society, namely, liquidation of illiteracy, rural reconstruction, work among the labour and backward classes,

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1 - Swami Tejeanand - Ramkrishna Movement - Its Ideals and Activities; Appendix A; p.35.
economic uplift of the people, removal of untouchability, spread of education, medical help and relief-work.

As regards its organisation, some confusion is often made between the Ramkrishna Math and the Ramkrishna Mission. The two, it should be noted, are legally distinct bodies, with their respective centres in different parts of the country and abroad. The Math is meant for the monks of the Ramkrishna Order whose chief concern is spiritual pursuits, whereas the membership of the Mission is open both to the monks and the lay followers of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, and its chief concern is social service. The two bodies are, all the same, closely related to each other, for the Governing Body of the Mission consists of the Trustees of the Belur Math, and the principal workers of the Mission are members of the Math, and both have their headquarters at Belur Math.

SWAMI VIVEKANAND'S INTEREST IN EDUCATION

Swami Vivekananda believed that ignorance was the greatest enemy of the Indian masses, that it was the root-cause of all their problems. Hence he pinned his faith in education, which, he thought, if rightly conducted, would spread the light of enlightenment and bring such new ideas to the people as would ultimately pave the way for their upliftment. In the right type of education, he believed, lay the real salvation of India. That is why he candidly said, "We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods, as far as practicable."¹ This is clearly indicative of the nationalistic ideology of Swami Vivekananda in the field of education.

HIS CRITICISM OF THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Most emphatically did Swami Vivekananda point out in his speeches the defects of the system of education then prevailing in the country. The following extracts from his speeches clearly reflect his opinion on this subject:

"The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place, it is not a man-making education; it is merely and entirely a negative education. .... Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet. ........"

"The present system is nothing but a perfect machine for turning out clerks. I would even thank my stars if that were all. But no, see, how men are becoming destitute of 'Shraddha' and faith. They assert that the Gita was only an interpretation and that the Vedas were but rustic songs. ......."

"Our pedagogues are making parrots of our boys, and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into them. ----- And after all that, what is it they learn but that what religion and custom we have are all bad and what the Westerners have are all good. ----- .

"------. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion - is it worth the name? The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence."⁴

⁴ - S. Vivekananda on India and Her Problems - Compiled by S. Nirvedananda; pp. 48-49-50.
From the above, it can be inferred that, according to the Swami, the following were the defects of the contemporary system of Indian education:

(i) It was merely a negative education, for it did not foster those positive virtues which a sound system of education ought to do.

(ii) It was divorced from the higher values of life, for it sought to impart only such superficial knowledge which would turn out efficient clerks.

(iii) It made students alien to their native culture and fostered in them scepticism towards their own religion.

(iv) It laid undue stress on cramming.

(v) It was unrealistic, for it did not prepare the student for his future life.

(vi) It paid no attention to character-formation.

These, to his mind, were serious defects of the system, rendering it unfit to meet the real needs of the country.

THE SWAMI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The whole educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda is summed up in his one sentence, "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man."¹ His chief philosophical hypothesis is that all knowledge is inherent in man; it does not come from outside. "All knowledge", to put it in his own words, "--comes from the mind; the infinite library of the library is in your own mind."²

This means that the seed of knowledge is already there in the human mind; what the educator has to do is to nourish it, so that it may

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sprout and grow. The Swami puts it beautifully in a metaphorical style, "The whole of the big banyan tree, which covers acres of ground, was in the little seed which was, perhaps, no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed. All that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell. It may seem like a paradox but it is true."¹ From this philosophy, it naturally boils down that man has to do his own learning; the external factors, like the teacher and the text-books, can at best provide him with the necessary background against which the seed of knowledge, already inherent in his mind, has to grow. The individual and his mind are thus, according to him, the most potent factors in the educational process; individual is himself the store-house of all knowledge; he has only to exercise his mind to become conscious of it.

THE MAN-MAKING AIM OF EDUCATION

The aim of education which was uppermost in the mind of Swami Vivekananda was the man-making aim. "The end of all education, all training, he said, "should be man-making."² The concept of man-making education, put forward by him, was calculated to indicate a system of education which would lead to an all-round development of human personality, a system,"by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet."³ Thus, by advocating the man-making aim of education, the Swami wished to broaden the scope of education so as to include the total personality of the individual within its fold. This meant a balanced development of all the aspects of human personality, along with the inculcation of such

³ - S.Vivekananda on India and Her Problems; Compiled by S.Nirvedananda, p.51.
manly qualities as strength, courage, boldness, self-confidence and fearlessness.

EMPHASIS ON CHARACTER-FORMATION

Great emphasis was placed by Swami Vivekananda on character-formation, as an important function of education, for it is character which, he believed, is the mainspring of all good ideas and thoughts. As regards his concept of character, he says, "The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind."¹ At another place he says, "Thoughts are the basis of character. Every thought leaves an impression on the mind either at the conscious or sub-conscious level. Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad."²

Thoughts are thus, according to him, the basis of character and as such to form a sound character, the function of education is to encourage good thoughts in the educand. The mind of the child being especially susceptible to new impressions, it is the duty of the teacher to give him such ideas and thoughts which may become the permanent basis of a sound and healthy character.

It is noteworthy that, in advocating the moral aim of education, Swami Dayananda Vivekananda is very close to some of the Western educational thinkers who have also upheld morality as the supreme aim of education. For example, Herbart (1776–1841) – the most doughty champion of this aim of education in the West, during the modern times – believed that it is morality - the basis of a 'virtuous' character - which should be the primary concern of the educator. In the ideal of 'morality' can

be summed up all the 'virtues' which Herbart stands for. His concept of 'Inner Freedom', as the basis of morality, means almost the same thing as the concept of 'Impressions' given by the Swami. By 'Inner Freedom' Herbart means harmony between our thoughts and actions, that is, a person can be said to possess 'Inner Freedom' if his actions conform to his virtuous thoughts. This is what Swami Vivekananda also means when he says that 'thoughts' or 'impressions' are the basis of a good character, - which means (good or virtuous action or behaviour - is the spontaneous resultant of good or virtuous 'thoughts' or 'ideas' or 'impressions', and hence all the efforts of the teacher - should be directed to the formation of such thoughts, ideas and impressions.

**HIS SCHEME OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

"Religion", says Swami Vivekananda, "is the innermost core of education."¹ In India, according to him, education without religion can never be national in the true sense of the word, for religion has been the chief distinguishing feature of her national life right from the earliest times. Most emphatically he says, "For good or for evil, our vitality is concentrated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy it and put in its place another. ______. For good or for evil, the Indian atmosphere has been filled with ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries; for good or for evil, we have been born and brought up in the very midst of these ideals of religion, till it has entered into our very blood, and tinged with every drop of our veins, and has become one with our constitution, become the very vitality of our lives. ______. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth, and this is the line of well-being in India - to follow the track of religion."²

² - S. Vivekananda on India and Her Problems, pp.8-9.
Religion thus being the most vital constituent of Indian culture, it should, according to the Swami, find an important place in the educational system of the country. Without religion, education in India cannot be national.

As an advocate of religious education, the views of Swami Vivekananda show a breadth of vision which was characteristic of his great master. He condemned religious education on dogmatic or sectarian lines, for he respected all religions. "I learnt from my master," says he, "the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion."\(^1\) Hence he advocated the teaching of 'true eternal principles' of all religions, and also the life and sayings of the great saints associated with them. Besides, he attached great importance to the practical aspect of religious education. Formal teaching of religion or doctrinaire worship, he believed, though not useless, were not enough. Religion, he said, should be a living experience with oneself. "Temples and churches, books and forms," to him, "are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is being and becoming. It is realisation."\(^2\) Thus he takes a very broad view of religious education - it is not merely an intellectual acquaintance with the principles of a particular religion but something much more than that - it is an elevating experience, a lofty feeling which colours the entire outlook and conduct of man.

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'BRAHMACHARYA' AND 'SHRAWDHA' AS INDISPENSIBLE FACTORS IN EDUCATION

Swami Vivekananda considered Brahmacharya and Shraddha as two most important factors in the educational process. "By observing strict Brahmacharya," he says, "all learning can be mastered in a very short time; one acquires an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once."¹ At another place, he says, "The chaster brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power."² By Brahmacharya, the Swami meant not only sexual chastity but complete continence, control of desires and transforming of sexual energy into spiritual energy, chastity in thought, word and deed. A true Brahmacari must fulfil all these tests, in order to be successful as a student.

The term 'Shraddha' is used by him to indicate self-confidence, which, he thinks, is an essential pre-requisite of effective learning. "The idea of true Shraddha," he says, "must be brought back once more to us. The faith in our own selves must be reawakened and then only all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves."³ Further he says, "This faith in themselves was in the heart of our ancestors; this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward in the march of civilization. If there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost their faith in themselves."⁴ Without self-confidence, he believed, there can be no striving, no progress. Knowledge, according to the philosophy of

Swami Vivekananda, is inherent in the mind of man; man is himself the store-house of all knowledge; if, however, he remains shrouded in the darkness of ignorance, it is simply because he lacks self-confidence, and does not have the necessary faith in the powers which God has endowed him with.

THE GURUKULA IDEAL

The ancient Gurukula ideal of education, with its emphasis on the personal contact between the teacher and the taught, was held in very high esteem by Swami Vivekananda, and he was of the opinion that something of that sort should be revived in modern India also. "My idea of education", he states, "is Gurugriha-vasa. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education."¹ At another place, he says, "One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest # teaching. In our country, the impetus of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulder of Tyagis."² This shows that Swami Vivekananda stood for restoring the same type of intimate and personal contact between the teacher and the taught which existed under the Gurukula system of ancient India. The personality of the teacher, who, under this system, is supposed to be a man of spotless character, a man of high spiritual and intellectual attainments, is, he thinks, bound to exercise a very healthy influence upon the development of the child's personality.

CONTENT OF EDUCATION

Though Swami Vivekananda was a great lover of the ancient

culture of India, especially the spiritual part of it, yet he was not blind to the good points of the Western culture. In fact, he stood for a healthy synthesis and harmony between the two. The content of education in India, he, therefore, opined, should be a happy blending of the Western Sciences and the Indian Spiritual Philosophy. "What we need", to quote his own words, "is to study, independently of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western Science; we need technical education and all else which may develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save something against a rainy day."\(^1\)

**REORIENTATION OF METHOD ON PSYCHOLOGICAL LINES**

One of the serious defects of the contemporary system of education, as pointed out by Swami Vivekananda, was that it laid too much emphasis on parrot-like cramming, with the result that the whole process of education had become a veritable drudgery for the child, and the knowledge thus gained by him did not have much practical value, for it was not based on an intelligent understanding or assimilation on his part. The Swami realised the gravity of this defect and hence stood for the reorientation of the whole educational methodology on the following psychological lines:

(i) The teacher should not try to dominate, he should only guide the child and remove obstacles from the path of his learning. He boldly tells the teacher, "You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature. ------. The child also teaches itself ------. what you can do is not of a positive nature but

\(^1\) Ibid, Vol.III; p.301.
negative. You can take away the obstacles and knowledge comes out of its own nature ________; within man is all knowledge and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher."¹

(ii) Knowledge to be given should be in consonance with the aptitude of the child. "The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies and so give to the pupil according to his tendencies."²

(iii) Ample freedom should be allowed to the child. "liberty," the Swami says, "is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if anyone of you dares to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child'. Hands off. They will solve their own problems."³ Such a child-centred approach of the Swami in the field of educational methodology has essentially a touch of modernity about it, and it surely bears a clear testimony to his deep understanding of the true nature and psychology of the child.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Of all the problems of Indian society, the one which vexed the mind of Swami Vivekananda most was that of women's sad plight in the social life of the country. "The principal reason why our race has degenerated", he felt, "is that we had no respect for these living images of Shakti."⁴ It was his firm contention that India can never grow or flourish as long as her women were kept in subjection and treated as inferior to men. "All nations", he asserts, "have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future."⁵

To ameliorate the condition of women in India, the most effective tool, according to the Swami, is education. In support of his view, he quotes Manu, "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons."\textsuperscript{1} Women, he contends, have great potentialities and, if educated, can become the most precious assets of the country.

The ideal of women's education which Swami Vivekananda put before the country is typically Indian. He abhors the tendency of those educated Indian women who take pride in imitating their Western counterparts. He would rather like them all to have before them the ideal of Sita. "The women of India", he says, "must grow and develop in the foot-prints of Sita. Sita is unique. She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita."\textsuperscript{2}

Education of Indian women, he further holds, should primarily cater to the requirements of a healthy and happy home-life. It should make them develop wives and enlightened mothers. For this, "Matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work and upbringing of children"\textsuperscript{3} should form a compulsory part of their education, besides other formal subjects of study. "Such an scheme of women's education," he believed, "will bring about the true salvation of the country, for it is in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born."\textsuperscript{4}

EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

The depth of feeling shown by Swami Vivekananda for the masses of India is remarkable. He had seen with his own eyes their

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid, Vol.V, p.22. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{2} Ibid, Vol.VII, p.213.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid, Vol.VII,p.215. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4} Ibid, Vol.VI , p.444.
pitable condition, and his patriotism had actuated him to take up their cause in a true missionary spirit. "So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance", he emphatically declared, "I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them."¹ Further, he attributed the decadence of Indian society to the neglect of the masses in the past, "Our great national sin", he said, "is the neglect of the masses and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for."² Speaking on another occasion in the same vein, he said, "A nation is advanced in the proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among the masses."³ Swami Vivekananda thus believed that the spread of education among the masses was necessary not only for their own good but also for the good of the nation as a whole. So long as the bulk of the nation's population remains steeped in ignorance and poverty, it cannot be happy and prosperous.

Education, again, thought the Swami, is the only effective remedy to improve the lot of the masses. He believed they can improve their own lot if, through education, they are enlightened; what is needed is that they should be given ideas which would bring about an all-round awakening among them. To put it in his own words "The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. They are to be given ideas. ----- . Every nation, every man and every woman must work out his own salvation.

Give them ideas, that is the only help they require, and the rest must follow as effect."

To the question what type of education should be given to the masses, the Swami's reply was, "Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature, and along with these, the profound truths of religion." That is to say, both secular and spiritual education should be imparted to them. It is wrong, to his mind, to deny them spiritual education. "Impress upon their minds," says he, "that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate even down to the Chandala, in these fiery 'mantras'."

As regards the medium of instruction for the masses, Swami Vivekananda advocated the use of vernaculars. The use of Sanskrit, even for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge among them, he believed, would not do. "I have been studying this language", he said, "all my life and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study it thoroughly. Therefore, the ideas must be taught in the language of the people." This does not, however, mean that the Swami wanted to discard the learning of Sanskrit by the masses altogether. He, on the contrary, said, "At the same time, Sanskrit must go along with it (vernaculars), because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige, a power and a strength to the race." He, in fact, emphasised the use of vernaculars as media of instruction only.

AN APPRECIATION OF THE SWAMI'S PLAN OF EDUCATION

From what has been said in the preceding paragraphs, it is easy to discern that the plan of education, which Swami Vivekananda - the great patriot-monk of India - upheld for the country was based on the

of the great monk, as already said, gives a touch of modernity to his educational theory and was a natural corollary of his educational philosophy which conceived of knowledge as inherent in man.

WORK DONE BY HIS DISCIPLES

Following the lead given by Swami Vivekananda, many of his disciples have evinced great interest in the subject of education. Both by their speeches and writings, they have contrived to agitate for educational reform in the country on the lines suggested by their master. They have tried to analyse and elaborate his ideas on this subject in sufficient detail, with a view to demonstrating their propriety to the people. The literature which they have thus produced on the subject of education itself constitutes a significant contribution of the movement to Indian education. Books like 'The Ideal of Education' by Swami Abhedananda, 'Hints on National Education' by Sister Niveditta and 'For Thinkers of Education' by Swami Ramkrishnanananda are valuable additions to the literature already existing on the subject. No doubt, all these books are based on the viewpoint of Swami Vivekananda, yet each one of them provides ample food for thought to those who are interested and engaged in the task of building up a new system of education suited to the needs of the country.

SISTER NIVEDITTA AND HER EFFORTS FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Of all the disciples of Swami Vivekananda, the one who was interested most in the field of Indian education was his English woman-disciple, Sister Niveditta, originally known as Miss Margaret E. Noble. The subject of education was very dear to her heart and she wrote various articles on the subject, which were published mostly in 'Modern Review' and the 'Karma Yogin', and these were later published in compiled form by 'Udbodhan' Office, Calcutta, under the title
'Hints on National Education in India'. In all her writings on the subject, she was inspired by one central motive, namely, to formulate a national system of education, suited to the real needs of the Indian people. "Education in India today", she said, "has to be not only national but NATION-MAKING."1

The field of education to which she particularly devoted her attention was that of women's education, and it was here that her contribution to Indian education is most solid. As regards her ideology of women's education, she was inspired by her master, and, as such, she stood for the traditional ideals of Indian womanhood. "There can never be any sound education of the Indian woman", said she, "which does not begin and end in exaltation of the national ideals of womanhood, as embodied in her own history and heroic literature."2

The earnest interest of Sister Niveditta in the field of woman's education prompted her to do something tangible in the field, and hence she thought of starting a pioneer-institution for women. For this, she started collecting funds in America, in the year 1900, and published a pamphlet, "Project for the Ramkrishna Girls School" almost simultaneously. In this pamphlet she explained at length the plan of the school she intended to establish. The main idea behind the project was "to make a beginning in offering to Indian women an education that shall mean development adapted to the actual needs of their actual lives."3

Her plan materialised in the year 1902, when the Ramkrishna Mission Sister Niveditta Girls School was founded at Calcutta. The

3 - Ibid, p. 80.
The institution is now housed in its own two four-storeyed buildings, and was made a branch of the Mission in 1918. It has expanded steadily from the time of its inception. "The Secondary section was converted into a multi-purpose school in 1957. There were 24 lady teachers on an average, of whom 10 were dedicated workers. Its strength in 1958 was 600."¹

The distinguishing features of the institution are:

(i) It is wedded to the ancient Hindu ideal of womanhood. Hence great stress is laid on the teaching of subjects which would make them efficient in home-keeping and child-upbringing. Attempts are made to foster in them the virtues of chastity, piety, and womanly modesty which are typically Indian.

(ii) Religious training is an essential part of the total education imparted in the institution.

(iii) The institution tries to develop a spirit of self-help among the women; emphasis is, therefore, laid on the teaching of arts and crafts which would enable them to earn their own bread and butter, if need be in future.

(iv) It tries to help Hindu widows by making them self-supporting; for this it maintains an Industrial section in which they are taught different types of Arts and Crafts, according to their tastes and talents.

(v) The institution has some dedicated workers who work for it purely out of the motive of social service.

SOME OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOUNDED BY THE MISSION

The Ramkrishna Mission has done laudable amount of solid work in the field of Indian education by establishing a net-work of educational institutions.

institutions all over the country. The most outstanding ones amongst them are briefly described below:

(1) The Ramkrishna Sharda Pitha, Belur (Distt. Howrah) —

founded in 1941 - it is a very big centre of education, having many departments, as mentioned below:

(i) The Vidyamandir - This is a wholly residential Intermediate College.

(ii) The Shilpmandir - for teaching training of 1 to 3 years in Electrical Engineering, Automechanics, General Mechanics, Carpentry, Weaving etc.; for post-Matric students the department provides a 3-year technical course in Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering.

(iii) The Janshikshha Mandir - meant for Social(Adult) education organises night-schools, film-shows, magic-lantern lectures, youth-camps and a mobile library.

(iv) The Tattwa Mandir - meant for religious education, organises religious classes to impart knowledge of Indian Philosophy, particularly Vedanta.

(v) Social Education Organisers' Training Centre - trains graduate students in various aspects of social education.

(vi) The Shikshan Mandir - trains teachers of the graduate standard and is a wholly residential institution.

(2) The Ramkrishna Vivekananda College, Madras - founded in 1946 -

It is affiliated for the new M.A. Degree course in Economics, Philosophy, Sanskrit and M.Sc. Degree in Mathematics, on inter-collegiate-cum-University basis.

(3) The Ramkrishna Mission Students' Home - founded in 1905 -

It has 3 sections, namely, (i) Collegiate, (ii) Technical,
(iii) Secondary; the latter two are entirely residential.

(4) The Ramkrishna Mission Boys' School - founded in 1932 at Tyagaraj-nagar (Madras) -

This is a group of schools - 2 High schools, 1 Middle School, and 1 Elementary school - with an attached hostel.

(5) The Ramkrishna Sharda Vidyalaya, Madras - founded in 1927

It is a self-contained centre for women's education, consisting of a High School, a Basic Training School with a Preparatory class, a Higher Elementary School and a Practising Model Higher Elementary School.

(6) The Ramkrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaickenpatyam (Coimbatore) - founded in 1930 -

It is a leading centre of education in south India, having the following institutions, as its constituent units:

(i) 1 Basic Training School,

(ii) 1 Senior Basic School,

(iii) 1 B.T. College,

(iv) 1 School Extension Service,

(v) 1 College for Physical Education,

(vi) 1 Rural Institute,

(vii) 1 School of Engineering, having the following wings:

(a) School of Engineering, (b) School of Agriculture,
(c) College for Rural Higher Education,

(viii) Industrial Section,

(ix) The Social Education Organisers Training Centre (S.E.O.T.C.).

(7) The Ramkrishna Mission Tapovanam - founded in 1924 at Tirupparaitturai (Tiruchirapalli)

The chief aim of the institution is to bring about a cultural renaissance following the lives of Sri Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda.
and to spread education on national lines. It runs (i) a Higher Elementary School, (ii) a B.T. College on Gurukula lines, (iii) a Multi-purpose School, (iv) a Gurukula Hostel, having an intensely religious life, (v) Spiritual retreats for spiritual aspirants.

(8) The Ramkrishna Mission Students' Home, Belgharia (24 Parganas) - founded in 1916 -

It is a home for College students recognised by the Calcutta University for Degree Courses. It imparts a course of man-making education and is especially meant for indigent students of approved parts who get here free or part-time board, lodging etc. during their college career. It is run on the lines of the ancient Gurukula, with an intensely religious life.

(9) The Ramkrishna Mission Vidyapitha, Deoghar (S.P.) and Purulia - founded in 1922 -

It is a residential High School for boys conducted on the model of a Gurukula; stress is laid here on the development of character and a well-integrated personality through harmonious attention to the body, mind and spirit. There is also provision for the teaching of Music, Painting, Tailoring, Gardening and Physical Culture.

(10) The Ramkrishna Mission Boys' Home, Rahara (24 Parganas) - founded in 1944-

It is mainly a residential educational institution for orphans and poor boys who are provided with all necessities so as to create a home-atmosphere for them. It stands on 34 acres of land containing 14 dormitories, a children's section, 3 school-buildings, a prayer hall, staff-quarters, kitchen and dining-hall, work-shops, cow-shed, library building, college-building etc. It conducts 2 Junior Basic Schools, a Vocational school, a Junior Technical School, a Senior Basic School,
a Multi-purpose school and a Junior Basic Training College.

(11) The Ramkrishna Mission Sister Niveditta School, Calcutta - founded in 1902 -

As already described, it was started with the plan to give proper education to Hindu girls, keeping intact the ancient ideals of womanhood; it has an Industrial section recognised by the Government, and a hostel attached to it.

(12) The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta - founded in 1938 -

It is a unique experiment seeking to harmonise national and international ideals of education. Its aim is three-fold - (i) a proper interpretation and appraisal of Indian culture, (ii) promotion of mutual understanding between India and other countries, (iii) encouraging the study of the cultural heritage of mankind as a whole, with a view to fostering international understanding. The Institute works in cooperation with the UNESCO and has grown into a recognised centre of learning, and is an international forum for the meeting of minds.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MISSION'S ASHRAMAS

Besides the above independent educational institutions, a large number of schools, both for boys and girls, are being run by the various Ramkrishna Mission Ashramas in different parts of the country. A list of such leading Ashramas and the educational work being done by them is given below :-

(1) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha (24 Parganas) -

1 Multipurpose Boys School, 1 Multi-purpose Girls' School,
1 Senior Basic School for boys, 1 Senior Basic School for Girls,
2 Junior Basic Primary Schools (financed by the District Board),
1 Residential Basic Training College(for women), and
1 Pre-basic (Nursery) School.
(2) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Baranagar -
   1 Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School,
   1 Junior Basic School (with two units), 1 Night School, and
   1 Sanskrit Chatuspathi.

(3) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Cherranunji -
   1 High School, 1 Technical School, 1 Hostel,
   1 Primary School (with two branches),
   2 Middle Schools in neighbouring villages.

(4) The Ramkrishna Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur -
   5 High Schools (2 for boys, 2 for girls and 1 for both in
   separate shifts), 4 Middle Schools, 3 Upper Primary Schools,
   2 Lower Primary Schools (one of them Night-school in Hindi alone,
   2 Students' Homes.

(5) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachhi (Murshidabad) -
   1 Junior Basic Teachers' Training College,
   1 High School, 1 Junior Basic School and 1 Adult School.

(6) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Taki (24 Parganas) -
   1 High School, 3 Upper Primary Schools (1 for boys, 1 for girls,
   and the third a mixed one), and 1 Students' Home.

(7) The Ramkrishna Mission Ashrama, Vishakhapatnam -
   1 Students' Home, 1 Culture-Play-Recreational Centre, known as
   Balmangalam, 1 Preparatory School for children aged 3 to 6, an
   1 Middle School.

(8) The Ramkrishna Math and Mission, Sevashrama, Bankura -
   1 High School, 1 Free Primary School, 1 School-cum-Community
   Centre with a Night School.
(9) The Ramkrishna Ashrama, Malda -

1 High School, 1 Urban Junior Basic School, 3 Primary Schools (for tribal and backward classes), 1 Junior Basic School at Mohanpara, 1 School-cum-Community Centre at Mohanpara, 3 Social and Adult Education Centres in the tribal and backward areas, and 1 Night School and 1 Students' Home.

(10) The Ramkrishna Sarda Sevashrama, Jayrumbati (Bankura) -

1 Junior High School (with technical subjects), 1 Pre-Basic School, 1 School-cum-Community Centre.

(11) The Ramkrishna Math and Mission (Kamarpukur, Hooghly) -

1 Senior Basic School, 1 Junior Basic School, 1 Pre-Basic School, and 1 School-cum-Community Centre.

(12) The Ramkrishna Ashrama, Trichur -

1 Gurukula for boys, 1 Gurukula for Girls, 1 High School, 1 Industrial School, 1 Creche (for the children of working mothers).

(13) The Ramkrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady -

1 Lower Primary School, 1 Sanskrit Upper Primary School, 1 English High School, and 1 Gurukula.*

Besides running such formal educational institutions as given above, these Mission Ashramas have been doing plenty of informal educational work also by way of maintaining libraries, and reading rooms, organising occasional lectures, imparting audio-visual instruction with the help of projectors and magic-lanterns and organising excursions and picnics of educational value.

* This list has been prepared out of 'The General Report of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission (1958), issued by the General Secretary, Belur Math (Howrah).
AN APPRAISAL OF THE MISSION'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN EDUCATION

The account of the Mission's educational work given above, bears a clear testimony to the valuable contribution it has made to Indian education. Inspired by the motive of social service and imbued with a missionary zeal, it has done excellent work in this sphere of national reconstruction in the modern times, especially during the present century. The cause of National education was very dear to the heart of the great patriot-monk, Swami Vivekananda, who started the movement, and, following the educational ideals and principles laid down by him, the workers of the Mission have tried to do their best in this sphere of their activity.

In its educational efforts, the Mission has been guided by one fundamental consideration, that is, India has to advance on the material front without losing her grip on the spiritual heritage of the nation. According to Swami Vivekananda, the individuality of India, as a nation, consists in her spirituality and hence the foremost function of education in this country, he held, should be to preserve the same; or else, the system of education cannot be truly national.

The Swami was a realist, all the same. He realised full well that modern India could not keep abreast of other nations without pursuing the materialistic line of development represented by the Science and Technology of the west. Hence, he conceived the entire programme of National education in such a way as to enable the people of the country to remain loyal to their spiritual traditions, and, at the same time, to master all that is necessary for making them as intensely practical and progressive in the sphere of Science and Technology as any other nation of the world. The whole educational work of the Mission has been
motivated by this synthetic ideology to bring the East and the West together on the educational front. A happy blending of these two distinct cultural currents - spiritual and materialistic - constitutes the key-note of the efforts made by the Mission in the field of education.

This is about the educational ideology of the Mission. Now, what is remarkable about the educational work of the Mission in the actual field is the large number of educational institutions founded by it. to implement this ideology. The Mission has not remained content only with the establishment of a few experimental or 'show-room' institutions; it has, on the other hand, tried to establish a net-work of institutions all over the country, with a view to meeting the educational requirements of the country to the maximum extent possible within its resources.

Not only the number, the variety of these institutions is also remarkable. They are of all types and of all grades, covering the entire educational field down from the Primary stage to the University stage, and imparting instruction and training not only in academic subjects but in a wide variety of technical and professional courses as well.

Besides, the Mission, instead of following a stereotyped educational pattern, has kept itself admirably abreast of the latest trends in the field of educational organisation. The bulk of its High Schools and Primary Schools are multi-purpose and Basic institutions respectively, as is the latest trend in these two sectors of education. Likewise, the institutions of higher education, run by the Mission, provide a great variety of technical and professional courses through their various sections and departments. As regards the extra-curricular side, emphasis is laid on a large number of modern activities, for example, A.C.C., N.C.C., Scouting, Girls' Guide and Community-work, Modern
teaching-aids, such as magic lanterns, projectors and radio are freely used. All this obviously gives a modern touch to the educational institutions of the Mission.

A large number of Students' Homes, established by the Mission, is a note-worthy contribution of the movement to Indian education. Through this institution, an attempt has been made to revive in modern times some of the outstanding features of the Gurukula system, as prevalent in ancient India. The life in a Students' Home is characterised by the same personal contact between the teacher and the taught, the same religious atmosphere and adherence to continence as in a Gurukula. These Students' Homes are, in fact, modern Gurukulas where attempt is made to build up character and to impart man-making education in an intensely religious atmosphere.

Another fascinating thing about the educational efforts of the Mission is that it has tried to make education a tool of social service and community-welfare. Most of the institutions founded by it have Extension-Services which are doing a fair amount of material uplift work by undertaking social-education programmes and by organising social-service camps.

In the field of women's education, the Mission has remained loyal to the traditional ideals of Indian womanhood. Education provided to women in the educational institutions of the Mission is, therefore, essentially home-making and character-forming. It seeks to make them chaste, virtuous and modest women, as well as efficient house-wives and worthy mothers.

To sum up, the Ramkrishna Mission movement has been singularly successful in striking a happy balance between the East and the West, in the domain of education. The charm of its educational efforts lies
in the fact that while imparting instruction and training in modern subjects, on the one hand, and keeping abreast of the latest developments in respect of educational organisation and methodology, on the other, it has remained true to the cultural heritage of India. By trying to build its educational edifice on the Gurukula tradition which is representative of the best in Indian culture, namely, religion, character, continence and concentration.