CHAPTER - VII

ACCOUNT AND ANALYSIS OF THE CENTENARY - YEAR FIELDWORK
CHAPTER VII

ACCOUNT AND ANALYSIS OF THE CENTENARY-YEAR FIELDWORK

The account and analysis in this chapter are based on the fieldwork done by the researcher. The researcher has gone round collecting data and holding conversations and interviews with the respondents in the field. Documents, books, booklets, newspapers, magazines etc. were collected, classified and consulted. Notes of the talks or interviews held with the respondents were kept. Repeat visits were undertaken where necessary to check the data and views provided by the various respondents or institutions etc. Meetings and celebrations were attended where possible. Pictures were taken and notes were made so that all these could be used to compose the account and analysis. This may be broadly said to constitute the first part of the account and analysis.

The second part consists of the collection and classification of the news accounts given by the various newspapers. As stated in the first part, the researcher visited and interviewed the Swamijis and others at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda centres, Maths etc. at Bangalore,
Mysore and Dharwad etc. The documentary and other types of data collected in course of these visits have been used to prepare the first part of the account. Such visits were not possible everywhere in the state and certainly not in the further northern part of the state extending into western and southern Maharashtra districts. Here the data on the centenary celebrations and related activities were found in the English and Marathi periodicals. The information available in the Kannada periodicals in Karnataka was routinely used for this account. The contents of the Marathi periodicals had to be studied and made usable for this account. This has been broadly done by conducting a limited content analysis of the Marathi papers and, to a more limited extent, of the English and Kannada periodicals. This content analysis conducted, broadly and selectively, not exhaustively, has been provided in the second part of this account. The dates of the events or programmes are not provided in the text as it is hoped that a general idea as to the period can be conveyed by the relative footnotes from the periodicals.

Part One

There are quite a large number of institutions established by the Ramakrishna Mission which have been
propagating the ideas of Swami Vivekananda. Such institutions are located both in India and abroad. The main activities of these institutions are:

1. to conduct religio-cultural festivals;

ii. propagation of religious and spiritual values in their universal aspects, publication of religious literature;

iii. running educational institutions as also hospitals and dispensaries;

iv. to conduct relief and rehabilitation work during natural or man-made calamities;

v. rural and tribal welfare work etc.

The motto of these institutions is "Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhithaya Cha," which means "Doing good to the world with a spirit of worship and thus paving paths for one's own salvation."* This motto was the one which Swami Vivekananda had before him. In line with the motto, the institutions have been carrying on their activities, a brief account of which is given below:

* Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Information Sheet (Bangalore: Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, 1992).
Relief Work

The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have been from their inception rendering services in times of natural disasters like floods, famines etc. In 1990-91 the Mission spent about Rs. 5.89 million on relief and rehabilitation and distributed relief articles worth about Rs. 1.42 million.

Medical Service

Medical service to the sick and the ailing is rendered in dispensaries and hospitals established by the mission. In 1990-91 medical service was rendered as follows:

i. 14 hospitals with 1929 beds, which served a total of 58,712 indoor patients and 20,73,471 outpatients.

ii. 22 mobile dispensaries provided medical facilities for 6,60,782 patients.

iii. A T.B. sanatorium run at Ranchi (Bihar) and at a T.B. clinic run at Delhi.

In the field of education the mission has been rendering yeoman's service. Swami Vivekananda time and again said,
"Education, education, education alone is the panacea for the problems of India."* To fulfil the dream of Swami Vivekananda a number of educational institutions have been established.

The range and variety of institutions run by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are truly amazing. There are various types of schools and colleges. There are schools of different grades, secondary schools, higher secondary schools, industrial and technical schools, Sanskrit schools, schools of languages and so on. There are junior and degree colleges including one Sanskrit college. There are four polytechnics and one computer centre. There are five teachers' training colleges and one training centre for librarians. There are four orphanages and one blind boys' academy. Hostels and student homes are as many as 97. There are several institutions: five for junior basic training, two for agriculture; and four for rural development training. Non-formal education is not forgotten: there are over eight thousand centres for such educational activities. The following figures would serve to give an idea of the enormous range of the much needed and useful

activities and services for the various classes and groups of boys and girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Institutions of Various Types</th>
<th>Students or Trainees Being Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,084</td>
<td>1,18,099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Activities At A Glance (Bangalore: Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, 1992).

Work for Women

Swami Vivekananda said, "All nations have achieved greatness by paying proper respect to women, and a country can't progress by neglecting its womenfolk just as a bird can't fly without one of its wings."* In pursuit of this goal a number of institutions devoted to the cause and progress of women have been established. Some of them are as follows:

1. Maternity sections at the hospitals at Calcutta, Trivandrum and Vrindaban.

ii. Domiciliary and maternity clinics at Jalpaiguri and Khetri.

iii. Invalid women's home at Varanasi.

iv. Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras.

v. Three girls' high schools at Jamshedpur.

vi. Sharada Mandir at Sarisha.

vii. Four training schools for nurses at Trivandrum, Vrindaban, Itanagar and Calcutta.

Through literature and preaching the persons in charge of these institutions keep men reminding of their duties towards women and the respect which should be shown by men to women. Vivekananda believed that the problems of women could be tackled better by women themselves. Hence a separate wing -- Ramakrishna Sarada Math and Sarada Mission -- has been established to attend to the problems of women.

Work for Youth

Swami Vivekananda had a great faith in youth. So special attention is paid to the youth in the institutions established for the benefit of the youth. At these institutions attention
is paid to the moral uplift of the youth. Study circles are established and seminars are held. Through these the youth are acquainted with the message of Swami Vivekananda. Special mention may be made in this connection of the study circle of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in which a youth forum meets once in 15 days and discusses the various problems faced by the youth of today.

Attention to Weaker Sections

In rendering medical service and extending distress relief and education, the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission pay special attention to the needs of those who are less fortunate in the social set-up. Within their limited resources help is provided to the weaker sections of society with the aim of restoring their lost individuality and making them aware of the world at large. This is done in the following ways:

1. By bringing in a limited way a few backward people from rural areas and exposing them to the mainstream of Indian culture;

2. By sending out dedicated workers to the rural areas with the aim of imparting secular knowledge to the rural people, and more so to the weaker sections.
Spiritual and Cultural Work

Both Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission lay emphasis on spiritual and cultural heritage of India. This is strengthened through classes, and private and public meetings. Books in English and other Indian languages are published to make people aware of their moral and spiritual legacy and of the fact that life becomes worthwhile when one lives for others.

As stated in the beginning, a number of institutions propagating the ideas of Swami Vivekananda have been established in India and elsewhere. There are 120 such institutions in India and 34 abroad.* Every state in India has one or more such institution. In Karnataka there are four such institutions -- one each at Bangalore, Mysore, Mangalore and Poonnampet (the last one in the Kodagu district). Quite recently one such institution has been established at Dharwad. In order to get acquainted with the activities carried on in these institutions the researcher thought it fit to visit the centres located at Bangalore and Mysore and have personal discussion with those in charge of the institutions. What follows is a brief account of the visits.

* Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission: Centres in India and Abroad (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1994).
Visit to the Bangalore Ramakrishna Ashrama

This institute, though called Ashrama, is not an Ashrama in the traditional sense of the term. This centre was established in 1903 with the main object of propagating the thoughts of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda, to suit the modern way of life. The institution is housed in a building of its own with a provision for a prayer hall, an auditorium, a meditation room, a library, an office etc. For the benefit of college students a hostel named Sri Ramakrishna Vidyarthi Mandiram for 90 students is run. The main stress of the activities is on reaching the public and acquainting them with the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays lectures in English and Kannada on the work done by Swami Vivekananda are held and these are followed by a general prayer meeting. It is a unique sight to see hundreds of persons participating in the prayer and also devotional music. The prayer meetings are held in the evening from 6 to 7. The function concludes with the traditional "Arati" and distribution of "Prasad". These meetings create an indelible impact on the minds of those participating.

The institute has a publication programme also. Books, pamphlets etc. in Kannada, English and Hindi are published by the institute.

* The meanings of Arati and Prasad are explained briefly elsewhere in this chapter.
All these publications contain the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a discussion of the ideals for which the Master and his disciple have stood. In order to impart moral, spiritual and cultural education to the boys and the youth, two separate units known as Vivekananda Balaka Sangha and Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha are run by the institute. The institute is also running the Swami Vivekananda Ashrama at Ulsoor, a part of the Bangalore city, where religious activities like lectures, discussions and Bhajans etc. are conducted. A hostel for the aged and retired monks of the Ramakrishna Mission is maintained at Ulsoor.

Not content with the above activities, the Ashrama has launched another venture, devoted to rural development, known as "Grama Kshema." Under this scheme, a few select backward villages have been adopted for all round, integrated development of the inhabitants of the villages. "The idea is to infuse courage and confidence into them and make them stand on their own legs ... to help them to help themselves in the shortest possible period."

Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore

The researcher made a visit to the Ramakrishna Ashrama in

* Swami Chidananda, Grama Kshema: Appeal and Information Brochure (Bangalore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, 1984).
Mysore. He met Swami Sureshananda, the President of the Ashrama. The Swamiji was kind enough to spare some time for him and acquaint him with the activities of the Ashrama. The Ashrama is mainly concerned with the spread of education — with emphasis on moral and spiritual education. With a view to impressing on the young minds the importance of education, the Ashrama runs two educational institutions. One is the high school known as Ramakrishna Vidyashala, which is a residential school. The other is the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education (RIMSE).

The high school run by the Ashrama offers courses of studies leading to the SSLC examination.* In a sense this is a high school like any other but with considerable difference. This is a residential school and students are admitted after a careful screening. Once admitted, the students are groomed into a

* This means the Secondary School Leaving Certificate examination. This is a successor to the earlier matriculation examination. This marks the end of the secondary school education and after this one is, broadly, qualified to seek admission to a college or professional courses of various types. The matriculation examination was generally conducted by various universities in the country; the SSLC (or its equivalents) is generally conducted by an autonomous board. The board may be one for a whole state or may be divided into regional units.
disciplined way of life. Students are offered all physical comforts. But the comforts are coupled with discipline, devotion, respect for teachers, studious activities and such other qualities needed for an all round development of the mind and body. In addition to following the prescribed syllabus, the students are encouraged to take lessons in Yoga and physical culture. After finishing their education in this high school, the students will have developed the right attitude and habits for serving people.

Every year about 300 students are admitted to the high school.*

The Ashrama also runs the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education, where a two-month diploma course is conducted for the benefit of high school teachers and junior college lecturers. The emphasis is on moral and spiritual education both in its content and methodology. This is done to enable those admitted to the course to handle moral education classes in their schools (or colleges) effectively. The medium of instruction is English and Kannada. The training imparted aims at the development of the total personality of the participants.

* The data in this regard were provided by Swami Nibhayananda, Swami of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama, Dharwad, in the month of October 1994.
Library

A library is run to cater to the needs of the students admitted to the diploma course. The collection includes books and other reading materials like magazines to support curricular studies. In addition the library also has a good collection of books on different religions, philosophies, ethics, morals, psychology including parapsychology, history, archaeology, arts, literature, education. Most of the books on Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Saradadevi are stocked in the library. Almost all books on and by Swami Vivekananda are also available here. The library also serves the academic needs of the President and other office bearers of the Ashrama.

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama, Dharwad

Two distinct divisions may be indicated in Karnataka — North Karnataka and South Karnataka. While the latter comprises the old princely states of Mysore and Kodagu, the north Karnataka comprises the four districts of Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur and North Kanara (Karwar) which were part of the erstwhile Bombay Province. In addition, the three districts of Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar, from the former Hyderabad state, and Bellary, from the old Madras Province, may be said to constitute the other part of North Karnataka. This area, i.e., North Karnataka, has its own
distinctive cultural features and is endowed with rich traditions in the field of art, architecture, literature, folk art and music. In particular, the Bombay Karnataka in many respects was far ahead in many respects compared with the other parts of the state. Dharwad, the district headquarters, even during the British days, was an important administrative centre. During the last part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, Dharwad became a centre of education. The first college in this region was established at Dharwad in 1917. This college, the Karnatak College, even today stands as one of the noted colleges not only in Karnataka but also in India. On the cultural plane also, Dharwad has gained eminence. In the field of music, particularly Hindustani music, Dharwad has carved out a niche for itself. Dharwad has been home to the top-notch artists in Hindustani music. Pandit Mallikarjun Mansoor, Mrs. Gangubai Hangal, Pandit Basavaraj Rajguru, Pandit Bhimasen Joshi are a few names in the galaxy. In the field of literature and culture, Dharwad has been the oldest literary and cultural centre in Karnataka. The Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangha* was established in 1890, much before the Kannada Sahitya Parishad** was born at Bangalore.

---

* Vidyavardhak Sangha means association for cultivation of knowledge.

** This means the Kannada Literary Conference. In the socio-political development of India, such literary conferences of the...
Dharwad has been the headquarters of the Karnatak University established in 1950. For all these reasons, Dharwad has been known as the cultural capital of Karnataka. Dharwad has the distinction of being the lucky place at which Swami Vivekananda halted for a brief while on his way to Bangalore in course of his travels in the country. There have been a good number of scholars, followers and admirers of Swami Vivekananda, from Dharwad. But until recently no institution or association had come up here, in Dharwad, to propagate the message of Vivekananda. In 1984 a handful of youths intensely interested in carrying on the missionary work of Swami Vivekananda came together to form the Akhil Karnataka Vivekananda Yuva Mahamandal. * The Mandal was registered as a society and in its initial period was concerned with selling books and other reading materials on and by Swami

Various "native" languages began to be established in the various parts of the country generally from the second half of the 19th century. They were looked upon, more or less as literary representative bodies and some of them debated political issues too. The demand for the linguistic reorganisation of India, which was realised in the mid-1950s later, was voiced and debated at such forums.

* This means General Youth Council.
Vivekananda in order to create awareness among the public in general and the youth in particular. The Mandal has conducted examinations aimed at personality development of the young boys and girls. It has conducted discourses and Bhajans etc. for the benefit of the wider public. It was felt that the activities should be undertaken on a more regular scale so that the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda could reach still wider sections of the public. Therefore it was decided that a separate association should be established to spread the message of Swami Vivekananda. So, on the auspicious centenary day of the Chicago addresses of the Swamiji, i.e., on 11 September 1993, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama came to be established in Dharwad (at 4th Cross at Saptapur). Swami Purushottamananda inaugurated the centre on 11 September 1993 and installed Swami Nirbhayananda Saraswati as President of the Ashrama. At present the Ashrama conducts regular Puja and Sankirtans* twice a day. Classes on Vedic

* A Sankirtan means a musical discourse. In such a discourse, while God is praised musically and by means of discussion, the whole performance is also directed towards the moral edification of the audience. The performance is designed to instruct (and occasionally entertain) the people around. Sankirtan is called by various terms in the various parts of India and the tradition goes back to several centuries of Indian history. Incidentally, in the pre-independence days, such a performance was often employed for mass education and political awakening.
chanting and Yoga are also conducted. Special lectures, seminars and week-long discourses on the Bhagavadgita are conducted by eminent scholars. A well organised library with a modest collection has been established. Discourses on topics of religious interests are arranged from time to time. The Ashrama has the following projects to be accomplished in the days to come.*

1. Establishment of a fund for the maintenance of the various centres.

2. Establishment of libraries and book stalls to sell and popularise books of and on Vivekananda and other personalities.

3. Construction of a prayer hall and living rooms for students and monks at Dharwad.

4. Construction of school buildings and hostels at Managoli and Shimoga.

5. Dairy and poultry training facility and a Kala Parishat (Arts Council) for the training of the blind in various art forms.

To celebrate the centenary of the Chicago addresses the Ashrama arranged different programmes for three days from 9 to 11 September 1994 at the Kalabhavan Dharwad. The programmes were conducted under the title "Vivekvardhini." Senior Swami Purushottamananda Maharaja of the Ramakrishna-Sarasashrama, Ponnampet (Koḍagū district), was the chief guest of the programmes. He delivered inspiring lectures on what Swami Vivekananda did for India and how it is incumbent on all of us to dedicate ourselves to the service of the people.

Swami Nirbhayananda said that the main purpose, of conducting this unique programme entitled "Vivekvardhini" was to spread the message of Swami Vivekananda to as many places as possible. As a beginning, the programme covered the districts of Belgaum, Biḍār, Bijapur, Dharwad, Bellary, Gulbarga and Raichur. At all these places, in addition to conducting discourse, Yoga classes and Bhajans etc. were arranged.

Speaking on the occasion at Dharwad, Swami Nirbhayananda observed that the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda have a universal appeal and are eternally sound. He said that the main emphasis of the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda was on the strengthening of human beings and it would almost be an impossible task to convey all those thoughts of the Swamiji in a short time of 10-15 minutes.
Janata Shikshana Samiti
Vidyagiri, Dharwad - 4
Golden Jubilee Celebrations of
J. S. S. College, Dharwad, 1993-94

Vivekananda Vidyarthi Bhavan

* * *

Received with thanks a sum of Rs. 10 (Rs. Ten only) towards Vivekananda Vidyarthi Bhavan

Rs. 10 /- Secretary, GJC Committee

A college erects the Vivekananda student home

The picture of a sample receipt (for raising donations)

A Kannada sheet of a lecture programme
arranged by the local Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama
To create awareness of religion was of utmost of importance and to express helplessness would amount to being unreligious. Sister Nivedita, it appears, once told Swamiji that Indians were extraordinarily mild to which the Swamiji retorted, "Are the Indians so timid or weak as not to do any bad things? I would prefer bad men to good men doing nothing." Swamiji's point was that we should all develop strength — physical as well as spiritual — to make life worth living. Swami Nirbhayananda said that Swami Vivekananda quite often cited stanza 3 of Chapter II of the Bhagvadgita when Arjuna, overcome with despondency, lays down his bow and arrows and expresses his inability to fight in the war. Shrikrishna goads him into action and Arjuna is ready to fight. Swami Vivekananda is reported to have mentioned on several occasions that even if by chance the Bhagvadgita were to be lost to humanity, Stanza 3 of Chapter II would be more than enough to infuse courage into men and make them work. Weaklings would never gain self-realisation. Swami Nirbhayananda noted that even Rajagopalachari, Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose had come under the powerful influence of Vivekananda in course of the struggle for freedom. But unfortunately, after independence, emotional integration which bound together people of different views, is fast declining. Nirbhayananda argued that we should realise that true religion and not the blind following of rituals and customs saves men. He said that Vivekananda found divinity in each
individual. Vivekananda prayed to God to make him a human being again so that he would be able to work and serve humanity. Swami Nirbhayananda recalled that Romain Rolland had maintained that there would be no second Vivekananda. Swami Nirbhayananda told the audience that Swami Vivekananda, who, in about two to three minutes, mesmerised the audience at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, was so humble that, on his visit to Dakshineshwara, he prayed to goddess Kali that she should make him a man again (so that he could work for mankind)! This one example tells us how important it is to be a human being. In the light of such a magnanimous thinking of Vivekananda we have to search our hearts and subject ourselves to introspection regarding the way we lead our lives.

Swami Veereshananda, of the Tumkur Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama, addressed the audience on 10 September 1994. The programme started with chorus of the notable sayings of Vivekananda, the most important being "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached," first in English and then in Kannada. Several other sayings or exhortations were recited. This created the right atmosphere at the gathering. Veereshananda observed that a mere mention of Vivekananda gave inspiration and confidence to people like him. He recalled how Vivekananda considered calling others
Veereshananda said that the word sinner does not find a place in Sanatana Dharma.

He said that at the time at which Vivekananda was born, people were swayed by blind faith. They were ignorant, idle and inactive in respect of our Hindu religion. Common people were just like sheep not knowing where they were going. In such discouraging and uninspiring conditions Swami Vivekananda not only inspired and enlightened the people in India about the rich heritage of Sanatana Dharma but also created a similarly enlightening impact on the minds of the people in western countries.

Swami Nirbhayananda, President of Dharwad Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama, then addressed the audience. He stated that Swami Vivekananda’s firm belief in going ahead in life with courage created an indelible impact on his (Nirbhayananda’s) mind and he became a follower of Vivekananda. Vivekananda always liked a brave person who might commit/mistake rather than a person who was idle or did nothing. Swami Nirbhayananda said that Swami Vivekananda, on landing at Madras after his return from the USA addressed a small audience and stressed that unless we become strong, we should not aspire for independence or freedom. Even if the wealth of the world were to be placed at our disposal, we would not be able to use it because we had not yet acquired the
requisite qualities and capacities. Swami Purushottamananda, of Poonampet Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission, concluded the function by advising the audience to offer meditation for a period of 20 minutes.

The function on 11 September (1994) started with an address of Swami Chandrasekhar, of Shamlily Ashrama, Hubli. He said that if one understood "Who I am," "Where I came from" and "What my aim is," one would take the first step in understanding what Vivekananda stood for.

Swami Veereshananda, addressing the audience, assured that the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda provided numerous remedies for the present-day all pervading ignorance among our people. He said that it was imperative that we should have the guidance of a Guru. He observed that the Indians were poor and miserable in spite of the wonderful past and a present providing diverse opportunities for our improvement and growth. He believed that women were in a very important position to shape the minds and hearts of the boys and girls and, in this task, they should seek the blessings of Sarada Mata.
Swami Nirbhayananda felt that the situation in our time was not bad nor were the people bad; what was lacking was the proper leadership, faith and hard work.

Swami Purushottamananda stated that Swami Vivekananda emphasised character building and developing human personality (man-making philosophy). Vivekananda also emphasised human values as divine values. If people followed the path shown by Vivekananda, they would be able to mitigate soon the suffering of humanity all over the world.

Part Two

The centenary year provided numerous opportunities for the researcher to go around and witness the various academic and popular activities arranged to recall the great mission of Swami Vivekananda. There were lectures, exhibitions, demonstrations of art etc. The media of the radio, the TV and the press came forward with the contributions of the various writers, poets, thinkers on the various facets of Vivekananda's life and activities undertaken for the Indian people and humanity at large. Witnessing these activities and programmes meant spending a lot of time and energy, making notes, keeping files,
pictures and other materials for the purpose of the fieldwork account. The researcher could not concentrate so much on the coverage of the radio and the TV news and other items on Swami Vivekananda. But he planned to pay some sustained attention to the coverage of the press. Here again, he found that the task was daunting. Karnataka, like several other states in India, has one state language, that is, Kannada, but there are also other languages which are quite vital to the politics and business of the state. The Kannada newspapers are vital and their coverage has received routine, regular attention. The researcher is well versed in Kannada and he had no difficulty in paying regular attention to the coverage of the Kannada newspapers and magazines, pamphlets, leaflets, posters etc. which came to be produced and displayed in the centenary year. Thus the coverage of the Kannada language newspapers etc., in a sense, may be taken for granted although the footnotes or citations in this thesis may not always be proportionately large to reflect readily the importance of the Kannada language sources. The English and Marathi language newspapers and other periodicals were also consulted, taking the assistance of knowledgeable friends (for the Marathi items).

The Karnataka state areas have been served variously by the newspapers and journals etc. coming from Bangalore and Bombay and other important cities in between like Poona, Kolhapur, Belgaum,
Dharwad, Mangalore and Mysore. These cities have been supplying English, Kannada and Marathi newspapers and other periodicals. The English and Kannada periodicals are considered the most important while the Marathi ones are considered next in importance. The periodicals of other languages, like Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Konkani have not been considered for the present study due to the obvious limitations of manpower and finance. The other consideration here is that these periodicals are used by minorities although it should be conceded that minorities are not necessarily unimportant in the life of the state or the celebrations like that of Vivekananda's work. As regards the English newspapers, the Times of India, the Indian Express and the Hindu dominate the scene. The Times and Express come from Bombay as well as Bangalore as both the cities produce their own editions. This is not true of their Marathi or Kannada versions. The Maharashtra Times (Marathi) comes from Bombay and Loksatta (Marathi, of the Express group) comes from Bombay as well as Poona. The Express has a Kannada version, Kannada Prabha, and this comes from Bangalore. The Hindu has a Bangalore edition which is supplied all over the state. Perhaps the most important local English newspaper is the Deccan Herald. This is produced in Bangalore as well as Hubli-Dharwad. The paper has a Kannada version, Prajavanı, which is equally powerful in circulation.
The Deccan Herald group also runs an influential magazine, Sudha. As regards the Marathi papers, the Maharashtra Times and Loksatta have already been mentioned. Besides these there are dailies like the Sakal, Pudhari, Kesari and Tarun Bharat. Of these, the Sakal and Kesari are produced in several places in Maharashtra. But usually, the editions produced in neighbouring Kolhapur, Sangli or Sholapur are supplied to the northern parts of Karnataka. The Pudhari is also produced in Kolhapur. The Tarun Bharat is produced locally, in Belgaum. These dailies also have their weekly versions either in the usual newspaper size or as magazines.

This account of newspapers will not be complete without the mention of Samyukta Karnataka. This daily is produced in Hubli. It has an office in Bangalore too. This is the paper which is read routinely by the local people in the Bombay Karnataka and Kannada readers in the major cities of neighbouring Maharashtra like Bombay, Poona, Kolhapur and Sholapur. It has its own magazine, Karmaveer.

What follows now is a brief analysis of the select news items which have appeared in some of the above dailies, roughly, during the centenary year.
Several English newspapers provided news and ran features on Vivekananda and his participation in the conference of religions at Chicago in the United States. The Employment News of New Delhi spoke of the conference which was attended by 8,000 delegates representing over 100 major religious sects or denominations in the world. The conference concluded with a prayer for peace and appeal for peace in the world.* The Times of India published a series of articles on the conference at Chicago. It gave a picture of the Art Institute of Chicago at which the conference was held. A bell rang at start of the conference. Vivekananda, condemning the various forms of sectarianism and bigotry, observed that the bell should be taken as the death-knell for all fanaticism and persecutions in the world. He appealed to the conference to see that those who preached hatred or practised violence in the name of religion were the enemies of every genuine religion in the world. While some observers of the times believed that Vivekananda had put across ably and skilfully the essentials and message of Hinduism over the other sects etc. Vivekananda highlighted the cause of Hinduism in a general outline. Vivekananda believed that on the banner of every religion in the world, the following words should shine well: "Help and not fight,

---

assimilation and not destruction, harmony and peace and not dissension."* Vivekananda argued that men of religion, of any religion, should have a minimum programme of not hurting others. He said, "Do not injure if you cannot render help."

** He felt that it is the fanatics in society who do not tolerate others and who try to organise ostracism against them. Vivekananda on the other hand appreciated the attitude of the thinking men the rational men who do not take objection if others do not agree with them or think differently. He observed that it was good that the Hindus believe that unity in variety is the plan of nature but the belief was unavailing in actual practice because bitter sectarian disputes were allowed to rage. He held that Buddhism, far from being a discordant note, represented the culmination of several attributes of Hinduism. Buddha had a wonderful humanising power and it benefited all. He believed that Hinduism would be a universal religion provided those belonging to it shed their narrowness and backwardness.

Vivekananda was rather upset that the leaders and professional advocates of Hindu religion did very little for the


poor and backward people of India. He was sorry that these leaders had hardly anything for the millions of people who were living on the flowers of the Mohua plant. The missionaries were there on the scene. But Vivekananda was not rattled by their presence. Vivekananda told the leaders of the Hindu religion to take this presence as a challenge and opportunity. The challenge was to be met by making the Hindu religion internally free from defects, and externally useful to the followers who were poor and backward. He stressed the need to bring Hinduism out of the atmosphere of the monasteries and priesthood.

Another article in the Times of India by Mr. B.R. Nanda (who has written extensively on India's political leaders and freedom fighters like Gopal Krishna Gokhale) described Vivekananda as a moderniser. Vivekananda was all for following the activism of the western nations but he was against any blind imitation of the west, specially in the external aspects. He said that one should be a lion and not an ass in the skin of a lion! He regretted that the priests and orthodox men of Hinduism were worried about whether the glass of water should be held in the right hand or left and whether one should gargle five times or six.
He observed that Hinduism had a very strong tradition of rationalism and there was no reason why the rich tradition should not be employed for modernising the Indian society.*

Dr. V.R. Karandikar wrote a series of articles in the daily Sakal. He says that the Christian missionaries and propagandists met their match in Vivekananda. These people seemed to be under an illusion that Christianity was certainly the only great religion and the delegates at the Chicago conference should be properly impressed by this notion. However when they met and heard Vivekananda at the conference, they met their Napoleon. They felt that here was a man who could not be overwhelmed with the usual arguments of Christianity. He offered constructive criticism not only of Hinduism but also the other religions in the world. The Christians, specially the protestants, were keen to hold a comparative discussion of the different principles of the different religions and show along the way the validity and acceptability of the Christian doctrines. However Vivekananda's appearance and performance on the stage tilted the scales in favour of Hinduism and the great international need to seek a

progressive harmony of the different religions. The proceedings of the conference noted the hypnotic influence of Vivekananda. Some people were almost led to believe that he was a divine personality in human form.*

Vivekananda put forward the proposition that it was most important that man attains godhood and temples, idols, worship and religious texts are only the aids to assist man along the way of perfection. Vivekananda stressed the central feature of Hinduism of accepting worthy ideas and suggestions from all quarters of the world, and Hinduism could not be fixed and restricted in a kind of cast iron frame. This was a sound and sensible view to take. For no one, of any particular religion, had any monopoly of understanding of the eternal truths of the world and hence it was but natural that we should be open to the truths and suggestions coming from any directions from any religions. It was good to have a comparative understanding of the principles and practices of various religions and personal meetings and exchange of views.

Dr. Karandikar also informs us as to how people have been greatly impressed by the activities and wanderings of Vivekananda.

He says that, roughly, up to the age of 23, Vivekananda's life represented the first stage. Thereafter he devoted his energies to the enlightenment of the Indians and others by means of his constant travels and rounds. He says that Vivekananda always kept with himself two very important books, the Bhagavadgītā and The Imitation of Christ. Dr. Karandikar's ideas have been captioned "Light of Religion from the East.*

The local Kannāḍa daily, Samyukta Karnataka, has always carried an extensive news of the centenary celebrations in the various parts of western India in general and Hubli-Dharwad-Belgaum-Bijapur region in particular.

The function to declare open the Saptapur (Dharwad) Ramakrishna-Vivekananda centre was widely reported. Earlier the Dharwad centre was operating from another building in Kalyannagar (Dharwad). In order to expand the activities and make them more vigorous, more suitable and convenient accommodation in Saptapur was found. Both the Kalyannagar building and the Saptapur building have been rented ones. The Saptapur building is more centrally located and can serve better the various

categories of participants and other citizens. Since an account of this opening ceremony has been given elsewhere in this work, here only important facts are touched upon. Two well known and influential Swamijis were invited to this function. A scholarly Swamiji of a Veerashaiva Math from Gadag was a valued guest. Another valued guest was the Swamiji from the Pejawar Math. The function was of course well attended. The speakers, besides expressing the hope that the centre would be of much help to the citizens, and particularly young men, of Dharwad, expressed their views on the need for understanding and harmony among the various communities in India. The speakers were unhappy that the Ayodhya dispute had caused so much violence and bad blood among the Hindus and Muslims. They felt that there was no end to the religious disputes and differences when we went on digging the debris of history. The question which structure is a mosque and which a temple could cause a controversy and a dispute. There were plenty of such potentially explosive structures and places. The Venkateshwara shrine at Tirupati had been a Veerabhadra shrine once. The Yellamma shrine near Saundatti (in Karnataka) had been believed to be originally a Jain shrine. If we went on raking up the past disputes, a lot of families would be disturbed, local communities would be rocked and such other tragic consequences would occur. The speakers were emphatic that there should be
no communal differences and blood-letting over such disputes and that the disputes should be settled in a friendly atmosphere of goodwill and trust.*

Another news item which received a wide publicity was Vivekananda's visit to Belgaum a century ago. This feature contains the photos of Vivekananda and the local Swamiji of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Math, Ambikananda Puri. The feature also had a photo of the room in which Vivekananda had stayed in the last century. The picture shows the cot and the bed, the staff used by Vivekananda and two framed photos of Vivekananda, one on a side wall and another, fixed on the wall parallel to the cot. The article says that Vivekananda came to Belgaum from Kolhapur and stayed here for 13 days. At that time, he was 29.

The article deals with the particulars of how the original house had passed to different owners over the years. There was an interesting discussion of how the Belgaum citizens of the day were agog at the English-speaking Swami. While Vivekananda stayed in the town, people fondly referred to him as the English-speaking Sanyasi: **

* Samyukta Karnataka (Kannada daily; Hubli: 12 September 1993).
** Manojgowda Patil, "An English-Speaking Sanyasi Visiting Belgaum!" Samyukta Karnataka (Kannada daily; Hubli: 10 September 1993).
In the centenary year, a telefilm on Vivekananda was shown on Doordarshan (or television run by the government of India.) A writer wrote an article in the Sakal describing the background and other particulars of the telefilm. The 81-year veteran, Fani Majumdar, was chosen to make the film. Mr. Majumdar took this task as a labour of love. This consisted of 52 episodes and sought to depict the various stages and facets of Vivekananda's life.

Swami Atmasthananda, of the Belur Math, near Calcutta, took up the writing of the script for the film. The film dealt with Vivekananda's attempt to turn himself into a perfect disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. The film was also to contain a few incidents in the life of the Swamiji. One incident related to a Sadhu who was singing in front of Vivekananda's house when Vivekananda was a young boy. The boy liked the song so much that he was prepared to give the Sadhu anything. When the Sadhu asked for a Dhoti, young Narendra parted with the article gladly without a moment's delay. Another incident related to a feared ghost in a tree. While young Narendra was playing with his friends near the tree, an old man told the boys not to climb the tree as there was a ghost in it, up there. Vivekananda did not agree. He went up and down the tree thrice and demonstrated that the fear was baseless.* Such incidents from the childhood years of

Vivekananda are reported by other writers too. These are recorded with great interest and they are looked upon as stories which can entertain and instruct young boys and girls. One particular incident relates to Vivekananda's brilliance. While he was at school, his teachers were impressed by his unusual talents. The mathematics teacher wanted Vivekananda to be on the very front bench in the class. However Vivekananda was fond of sitting with his friends at the back of the class. Once when the teacher was engrossed in doing a sum on the blackboard, the boys at the back were found talking about something. The teacher was disturbed and angry. He began asking each boy questions about what was being done on the board. Only Vivekananda could give satisfactory answers. The teacher asked Vivekananda to sit down while the other boys were asked to stand up. When Vivekananda continued to stand, the teacher shouted reminding him to sit down. At this stage, Vivekananda came forward with the plea that the punishment of standing was given for the talking and disturbance; although he answered the questions, he was also a party to the talking and disturbance and hence he also deserved punishment like the others. The teacher accepted the plea and was much pleased to excuse the boys at the back.*

A former Vice-Chancellor gave a lecture at Karad (District Satara) on how Vivekananda became such a powerful speaker. Referring to Vivekananda's extraordinary oratory at the Chicago conference which had been held as a part of a wider science conference, he observed that Vivekananda's reading was wide and various and very early in his life he had read encyclopaedia volumes. Besides the mighty intellectual efforts, Vivekananda was fond of exercises and used to visit a gymnasium regularly. Vivekananda was also fond of music and had taken a training in it for three and half years.*

The Princess of Satara, Mrs. Sumitraraje Bhosale, participating in a celebration, observed that young men would do well to study thoroughly Vivekananda's ideas and projects which were fortunately available to all in his books. The young men had assembled in the local palace to declare open a centre for the sale of Vivekananda's books. This function was organised by the local Janata Cooperative Bank and the city library.**

The Sakal carried a news that the Belgaum city would undertake a programme to commemorate Vivekananda's participation

---


in the Chicago conference. The activities were conducted on 11 ans 12 September 1993 at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama, located in the Risalbar Galli in the city. An essay competition for college students, a Bhajan programme, and Shrikrishna Deshmukh’s lecture on "Vivekananda in Chicago a Hundred Years Ago" constituted the initial phase of the activities. In the evening there was to be an Arati and Prasad.* The next day, there were to be an elocution competition for college students followed by a Bhajan. In the evening there was to be a lecture by Mrs. Kumudini Joshi on the Impact on the World of Vivekananda's Historic Lectures.

* Arati is in brief a ceremonial waving of a lamp or lamps as a part of the various items constituting the ritual of a Puja. Arati may be performed early in the morning (to "wake up" the god) or at night (before the god "goes to bed.") It may be performed at any other time, on any days, and of course, usually on festival days. It may be offered by the particular worshippers as a part of their usual duty or by others, any devotees, who wish to offer an Arati. The lamps in question are (edible) oil or ghee lamps, with wicks etc. The lamps are held in a hand or hands and waved from (the worshipper's) right to left. After such a waving, the lamps are taken around so that the others, devotees etc., may pass their hands lightly over the flames and pass the hands over their eyes.

Prasad is usually some sweet, sugar, copra, dry dates, or mixture of such items. Prasad means consecrated food. Prasad is distributed after offering it to God. Prasad also signifies a ceremonial meal which may be eaten by the devotees or others like visitors or guests.
at Chicago. The programme was to be concluded with a prize distribution ceremony.

Inaugurating the centenary celebrations at Miraj, Bodas Guruji observed that the thoughts of Vivekananda were most inspiring and ennobling to the young men and women today as they had been in the past. He was addressing the audience at the Ramakrishna Satsang Mandal (Good Association Circle). This was followed by a lecture by Swami Shivananda of the Ramakrishna tradition.

There have been a number of schools and colleges run by an educational society, called Vivekananda Education Society. This society has been running a number of institutions in the Sangli, Kolhapur and Satara districts. It should be noted that the society was not brought into existence in the centenary year. It pre-dated it. What these institutions were now doing was to participate proudly and enthusiastically in the centenary celebration.


** Bodas Guruji says, "Vivekananda's Thoughts Are Inspiring To The Youth," Sakal (Marathi daily; Kolhapur: Kolhapur edition, 12 January, 1994).
At Satve, Satve School and the Girls' High School, run by the Vivekananda Society, were jointly organising a vocational guidance camp for the benefit of the boys and girls in the area. Professor N.H. Patil advised the students to develop initiative and persistence if they wanted success in various professions or occupations. Ashokrao Chimte, a young industrialist, provided interesting information in various professions, and the difficulties that may be faced and the ways to solve the difficulties. Mr. S.D. Jadhav, the nursery plantation officer of the Panhala Taluka, explained the importance of social forestry and demonstrated the various steps to raise various types of nursery beds.*

The Vivekananda Knowledge Development Centre at Kupwad, a suburb of Sangli, in cooperation with the Sangli District Library, organised a student guidance workshop on the subject: How To Study. It was observed that, too often, students set before themselves very high goals, but they are not able to realise them and are disappointed because their approach and methods are found to be defective. This course was meant for the students of colleges and the high school students above the eighth standard. Success and self-improvement were shown to be possible by means of

self-hypnotism, Yoga (for concentration), relaxation memory technique, faster reading, personal discipline, planning the mastery of different subjects, and the method of writing examination papers.*

Mr. G.L. Airapure, the finance secretary of the Vivekananda Education Society, was invited to distribute prizes to the students of Valmiki School, of Talamavale (District Satara). He used the occasion to advise the students to study Vivekananda's ideas. He observed that the modern age was competitive and students could ill-afford to live in isolation. He assured that the traditional rural-urban gap in the standards of students was being bridged thanks to the new awareness and methods of work adopted by the rural students. He said that there was a need for the modern students to go in for job-oriented courses and carve out their own careers. At the same time, students who secured high-level positions should never forget their humble origins and the difficulties they had to face. He regretted the growth of corruption in public life and advised the students to stay away from corruption and build their solid careers on their own strength.

skills and character. "Vivek," a manuscript souvenir, was released on the occasion.*

The students and teachers of the Vivekananda institutions have actively participated in helping the distressed and quake-stricken people. The secretary of the Vivekananda Education Society, Mr. Abhaykumar Salunkhe, declared that the students and staff of the various institutions would contribute (about) Rs. 6 lakh to relieve the sufferings of the earthquake-affected people of the Marathwada region (of the Maharashtra state). This amount was to be raised by collecting contributions of two lakh students (at the rate of Rs. 2/- per head) and those of seven thousand employees (one-day salary of every employee). All these people were working in over 300 institutions scattered in 11 districts and the amount was to be sent to the state government as soon as it was collected.**

Another town which observed the centenary celebrations was Chaphal (in the Satara district). This town was the birth place of another activist saint, Swami Ramdas, who exhorted people to develop intellectual and physical strength and who often gave


advice and suggestions to the founder of the Maratha empire, Shivaji the great. The week-long celebrations were inaugurated at Samarth (Ramās) Vidyamandir (School). The photo of Vivekananda was taken round in procession and it was worshipped and garlanded. Twelve hundred students, together with the boy scouts and music teams, joined the procession. A District Council member, Mr. D.Y. Patil, performed the worship and the head-master, Mr. P.P. Jadhav, spoke on the occasion.*

The Sangli chapter of the All India Vidyarthi Parishad (Student Conference) observed the youth week to mark in celebration of Vivekananda centenary. A procession of 250 students was organised under the leadership of Balasaheb Gaikwad, president of the state office (of the Parishad) and others like Manjiri Lele and Niranjan Joshi. The head-master of the Arwade school, Mr. A.V. Apte, welcomed the procession and garlanded Vivekananda's photo. The procession went round through the palace cross roads and ended at the Dinanath Mangeshkar theatre. There the gathering was addressed by Professor Arun Dabir. He told the gathering that real India lived in villages and it was therefore necessary for the young boys and girls to go to the villages to create a new

awareness among the people and to bring them in the stream of modernisation. He also advised the youth not to be swayed by the corrupting influence of the various foreign cultures.*

At Pargaon (Kolhapur district), the Parashar High School, Junior College, Polytechnic and Girls' High School undertook a programme of centenary celebration. Dr. D.B. Jayadeep, of the local rural hospital, gave a talk on blood donation. Another doctor, P.G. Patil, addressed the gathering on the religious and educational mission of Vivekananda. The joint secretary of the Vivekananda Education Society, Mr. B.B. Aparadh, also spoke on this occasion. Mr. N.D. Birje and Mr. S.G. Patil, of the high school, discussed the nature and importance of the Hindu festival of Sankranti.**

Under the auspices of the All India Vidyarthi Parishad (Student Council) a centenary programme was launched in the Pathak convention hall. Mr. Milind Kulkarni spoke on "Vivekananda for Youth." A souvenir on the theme of inter-state student life


was released on the occasion at the hands of Mr. Dinkarrao Shalgar. The other villages covered in the district (of Satara) for the celebration were Atit, Padali, Wathar, Wagholi, Karhad, Dahivadi, Bidal, Mhasavad etc.

At the Wathar station, Mr. Vinayak Kulkarni spoke on Vivekananda's knowledge and spirit of renunciation. He advised the youth to follow the great ideals of Vivekananda. At Wagholi, as a part of an awareness week, the local Rayat (People) Education Society's Bharat School and Junior College organised various activities. One of the activities was a handwriting competition for students. The winners were awarded certificates at a ceremony which followed.*

At Patan (District Satara) the Salunkhe High School, run by the Vivekananda Education Society, and the Junior College celebrated the centenary by organising elocution and sports competitions. The students took a pledge on the occasion to propagate Vivekananda's ideas and ideals to the lowest strata of the society around.**

---


At Kodoli (District Kolhapur), the centenary was celebrated, among other things, by organising a lecture series. Principal Gopal Krishna Dhavale, of the Yashvant B.Ed. College, gave a lecture (one of the series) on the life and philosophy of Vivekananda. He said that people should aim at a spirit of detachment in the day-to-day life and should believe that the spiritual wealth is more valuable than the material wealth. Dhavale garlanded the photo of Vivekananda on the occasion.*

At Kavathe (Piran) (District Sangli), the Vivekananda Science Forum celebrated the centenary by organising a series of talks. On this occasion, local students who had won prizes in elocution competitions were felicitated. The Verala (river basin) Development Project organised a nature study camp. The outstanding participants were awarded proficiency certificates.**

At Wing (District Satara), at the school, the celebration was arranged and as a part of it Vivekananda's photo was taken round in procession in the village. At the end, Puja was

---


performed by Mr. D.R. Kanase, the Gram Panchayat Sirpanch (Chairman of the Village Council). The collection box was taken round and the students and teachers raised a sum of Rs. 856/-. The local notables and others promised to raise donations amounting to Rs. 18,159/-. A number of instructive talks were arranged during the week. Elocution and essay competitions, drawing and other competitions and exhibitions, and sports and cultural activities were conducted on the occasion.