DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. OVERVIEW

There are several literary compositions based on the story of Rama. Valmiki wrote the first Ramayana. Among the other famous Ramayanas, Adhyatma Ramayana is a well-known composition. Thunchath Ramanujan Ezhuthachan selected Adhyatma Ramayana for composing the story of Rama because he states that Adhyatma Ramayana undoubtedly helps a person for the realization of the ultimate truth leading to Mukthi or liberation. Rama is considered as God in human form representing Brahman and is described as the ideal to be followed by humanity. Rama is depicted as the concrete form of Dharma (Ramo Vigrahavan Dharma). As a son, student, husband, king, warrior, brother, friend, teacher and enemy he is a model for humanity. There are others who represent the ideal qualities such as Sita, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Satrughna, Hanuman, Sabari, Swayampraba, Jadayu, Vibheeshana and Mandodari. Sita represents all that is excellent in womanhood and motherhood. Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrughna
represent ideal brothers. Ideal teachers are represented in the characters of Vasishta, Viswamithra, Valmiki, and Agasthya. Saintly devotees like Sabari and Swayamprabha represent the full-devoted souls who have dedicated their life for Mukthi or liberation. Hanuman is an outstanding character in Ramayana depicted as a model of perfection in physical and mental strength and completely devoted to the service of Rama. Different characters in Adhyatma Ramayana represent the various natures representing the qualities of individuals. While Rama, Sita, Bharatha, Lakshmana and Satrughna represent an elevated level of human culture; there are characters like Ravana representing violence, selfishness, and ego. Bali and Sugreeva are examples of fraternal enmity, just opposite to the nature of Rama and his brothers. If Sita represents the excellence of womanhood, Surpanekha represents a low type of woman indulged in the pursuit of amorous pleasures. Every character in Ramayana is unique and significant, varying from the extreme ideal example to those who are representing the lowest levels in culture.

In short Ramayana gives a comprehensive picture of the world representing the good and bad qualities. It is a
description of the perpetual warfare between Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (evil) taking place in the minds of every person. While Rama is representing God with the quality of enjoying in the self (Atma-rama), Ravana represents a person with mere mastery of worldly knowledge without spiritual development. While Rama represents Vidya, Ravana represents Avidya.

The qualities and the results of Vidya and Avidya are represented not only through characters but also through explanations and illustrations as defined in ‘Lakshmanopadesam’, and through the advices given to Thara, Swayamprabha, Sabari, Bali etc. Adhyatma Ramayana in short illustrates the qualities of Vidya and Avidya, and how to attain Mukthi from the worries of the worldly life. According to Ramayana, one should lead a balanced life integrating the worldly life and spiritual life. The aim, content, method, and discipline of an ideal educational system are clearly described in the book directly and indirectly. In short Adhyatma Ramayana clearly illustrates how the basic values of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha may be achieved.
5.2. DISCUSSION

1. Since the aim of life and education are the same, experience gained by the individual from informal, non-formal or formal situations of learning should be supplementary and complimentary with each other. For example, the most effective education to start with is informal in nature. The child follows the role models of parents and elders and acquires knowledge from personal discussions. Incidents witnessed by the children in the society represent the means and source of informal education. In Adhyatma Ramayana Rama is wedded strongly to moral values and Dharma, because he sees his father himself as a role model. Ravana has a negative approach in life because his mother herself tells him to take revenge on Kubera, his half-brother and Devas. There are several instances like these, which show that informal education has a great role in the development of personality of the individual.

The effectiveness of the non-formal education is also highlighted in Adhyatma Ramayana. The experiences gained by Rama and Lakshmana while accompanying the sage Viswamithra to forest is the typical example to show the effectiveness of non-formal education. Several examples like
these can be quoted. The most cited example is ‘Lakshmanopadesam’ described earlier in chapter-IV in detail.

The formal education imparted in the hermitages of the sages’ shows its importance. From the description of hermitages of Vasishta, Viswamithra, Sudheeshna and Bharadwaja we can understand the effectiveness of the formal education. It is to be noted that the education is completely integrated with social and natural environment with a view to achieve the ultimate goal namely self-realization. In this process there was no contradiction between the experiences gained from home, society and educational institution. Hence education was completely integrated with situations in life. When education is isolated from the reality of life and society, it becomes meaningless to the students. Very often in our society there are contradictions and clashes in the ideas gained from formal, informal and non-formal approaches. Maladjustment and personality clashes are created when the home, school and peergroups have different and opposing approaches and concepts. Deterioration of values are mainly due to the lack of conviction in the value system. The conflicts, corruption, dehumanization, fissiparous tendencies, selfishness, violence,
jealousy and intolerance are mainly due to the contradictions which an individual faces among formal, informal and non-formal agencies of education.

Ramayana gives the message of complete co-ordination between these three different systems of education. In other words the aim, content, method and teacher-pupil relationship should be such as to avoid conflicts between the home, society and school. The typical example is the present situation in Kerala regarding violence and hatred witnessed during the election to students’ union in schools and colleges. It is highly disappointing to note that the management, students and authorities have no concern regarding the constitution of students’ union. It is regrettable to note that very often we forget the aims of education and engage in activities, which are highly detrimental to the peace and harmony of the society.

The importance of the role of formal, informal and non-formal systems of education is highlighted in 1Bhagavad-Gita too.

This means that those ‘who are considered as superior and great are models for others, for whom their words are the
law and the whole world follows their action’. As the elders including the parents, teachers and social leaders serve as model for the young generation they should be very careful in their dealings with the young ones. In other words the corollary of the statements is a common proverb ‘every people get, their government which they deserve’.

The most qualified and eminent persons were recommended for recruitment as teachers because they will serve as role model to the society. It is with this idea in mind that Gandhi used to say: “Teacher is an approved agent of the society for bringing about social change”. In other words a country rises up or falls low, as the teachers are high or low. The present society has not given due consideration to humanism and value system; It seems that acquiring wealth is the only value pursued by the large majority in the society. This is very often contributing to immoral, antisocial and corrupt practices. The message of Ramayana is the integration of different systems of education- formal, informal and non-formal to achieve the cherished goals of education.

In Adhyatma Ramayana we may see that the formal, non-formal and informal education are integrated together in a
natural way. Formal education is given to young men and women in accordance with the curriculum of the hermitage known after the presiding teachers such as Vasishta, Viswamithra, and Agastya etc. But even after the formal education there is non-formal education through discussions, seminars, function such as ‘yagas’ and at the assembly of scholars. Most of the Upanishads are the outcomes of such discussions.

In Adhyatma Ramayana there are several instances, which show the effectiveness of informal education. Some examples of such discussions are those between

1. Rama and Kousalya,
2. Rama and Sita,
3. Rama and Lakshmana,
4. Rama and Bharatha,
5. Rama and Guha,
6. Rama and Thara,
7. Rama and Sabari,
8. Thara and Swayamprabha,
9. Hanuman and Sugreeva,
10. Sampathy and Monkeys,
11. Hanuman and Jambavan,
12. Hanuman and Ravana,
13. Vibheeshana and Ravana,
14. Rama and Vibheeshana, and
15. Sita Devi and Hanuman,

The above instances show the crucial role of informal education. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that formal, informal and non-formal educations are to be integrated for the all-round development of the personality of the individual. In our present society the non-formal media and the informal experiences are sometimes going counter to the values taught in formal system of education. It is this conflict, which is the main cause for many of the dehumanizing effects in our present society. It has to be remembered that Mahatma Gandhi who said, “My life is my message” is the typical representative of the culture highlighted in Ramayana. It is worthwhile to remember that his ideal was ‘Rama Rajya’. The principles of Adhyatma Ramayana serve as a beacon light – showing the right path to follow true education necessary for the peace and welfare of the whole society. In short we may conclude that Adhyatma Ramayana is the essence of Vedas and Upanishads stated in a
simple way to be understood by common man for attaining liberation from sorrow and miseries.

2. The Vedic philosophies declare that ‘Mukthi’ (liberation) is the aim of life. Hence education should prepare the individuals for achieving the values of Dharma for attaining Artha (wealth), Kama (worldly pleasures) and Moksha (Liberation from ignorance and sorrow). The ultimate aim of education is Mukthi or Liberation. This concept is basic in Indian philosophy and culture and also accepted by Buddhism and Jainism. Dr. Radhakrishnan in his book, ‘Indian philosophy’ quotes: “Ya Vidya Vimukthaye” meaning that vidya is that which liberates man. The upanishads, puranas and smrithis highlight this aim of education. Adhyatma Ramayana is a purana based on the Vedantic philosophy, in which Rama is depicted as the manifestation of Brahman. Realizing the Brahman and realizing the self are the same process. So the aim of education is also known as ‘Atmasakshathkara’ (Self-realisation). According to Indian tradition, one realizes everything including the ultimate reality by realizing himself. Plato also mentions self-realisation as the aim of education. According to Plato realizing the self is realising the weakness and strength of a person for development
by rectifying the defect and improving the desirable qualities. The Indian concept of education is very clearly stated by Swami Vivekananda as “the manifestation of perfection already existing in man” Rousseau in his ‘Emily’ mentions about the aim of education as “leaving the child to Nature.” He points out that every body is born pure and innocent but the society corrupts the person. Rousseau’s concepts are closer to the Indian concept of education. On careful scrutiny it can be seen that the aim of education in Adhyatma Ramayana is a comprehensive one. Ezhutachan, the author of Adhyatma Ramayana states in his ‘Harinamakeerthanam’ as follows:

2 “One should not be proud of his self and become egoistic but, if he thinks so, he should think that he is the integral part of the whole universe”. This is psychologically very significant. Accordingly when the personality of the individual develops the ego decreases and when the personality fully develops there will be no self-hood. From the social point of view an individual is an inseparable part of society and culture. All these indicate the importance of self-realization as an aim of education. Thus it can be seen that the self-realization is a very comprehensive
concept from the point of view of philosophical, sociological and psychological points of view.

Some people think that Even though India has achieved great heights in spiritual matters the Indians have neglected worldly life and related subjects. This is a very wrong concept because Vedas and vedangas including smrithies have pointed out the need for Aparavidya (worldly subjects) and Paravidya (spiritual subjects). This principle is revealed in Adhyatma Ramayana. It is very evident that a person should be educated in the subjects necessary for worldly life including his profession, social life, personal life, and aesthetic life. In Ramayana, it is stated that; 

3‘One need not live for Bhoga (worldly enjoyment) but at the time need not avoid rightful enjoyment’.

Sree Sankaracharya has also recommended that one should enjoy the life in accordance with Dharma by acquiring wealth through right means. 4 How to discharge his duties, earn money and spend in the right way were the essential contents of ancient education.
It has been mentioned here that, the great saint Thiruvalluvar highlights only Dharma, Artha, and Kama (Akam, Porul, Impam) as the aims of life. This means learning worldly sciences and leading a healthy social life is not against the ultimate realisation of Mukthi. The righteous life based on Dharma naturally leads one to Mukthi or ultimate liberation.

Sri. Aurobindho has explained the integrated nature of curriculum resulting in personality development in which the physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, and spiritual levels are to be properly balanced to achieve the values of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha.

3. Dharma is the basic value highlighted in Ramayana. It has been pointed out that Dharma has four important qualities - truth, compassion, purity, and sacrifice. In Skandapurana these four qualities are envisaged as the four legs of the ox (Nandi) on which the Supreme Being Lord Mahesa is seated. Symbolically this explains the importance and significance of Dharma in Indian context. According to Adhyatma Ramayana, a person should not be guided by his selfish interest, pleasures or by his emotions. Dharma should be the means and ends of every action. Even though Dasaratha
does not request Rama to go to the forest, Rama willingly and happily rejects the crown and goes to the forest considering his duties towards his father. Lakshmana is another example for extreme sacrifice, representing ‘Dharma’ of a younger brother. Sita is a perfect example of Dharma of a woman. Guha, and Sugreeva represent the duties of the friends. Hanuman represents the qualities of devotion, courage, valour, and sacrifice. The examples of great souls attaining Mukthi (liberation) are indicated in the characters of Jadayu, Sabari and Swayamprabha. These are positive aspects of virtue pointed in Adhyatma Ramayana. But there are instances showing Adharma and its dangerous consequences also. Ravana and Bali are typical examples for this. They were ferocious warriors and powerful kings; but due to their ego, pride, and amour they had to suffer. The greatest quality of Rama is highlighted in his noble character of rejecting what is not belonging to him. He is only concerned with providing happiness to others. Adhyatma Ramayana reveals the fact that Dharma is the sum and substance of life.

4. The Sanskrit equivalent for education is vidya, which means knowledge. This knowledge is that which, when
acquired, there is nothing more to know. A person who has acquired this knowledge realises ‘Sachidananda’, eternal bliss that includes Sath, Chith and Ananda. This is also known as realisation of Brahman. Sree Rama is depicted in Adhyatma Ramayana with the qualities of Sath, Chith and Ananda. A person who has reached this stage is capable of controlling his intellect by the soul. In such cases the intellect controls the mind and mind in turn controls the senses, and senses control the body. Such persons are the liberated souls.

To achieve this goal the training and education should start in the order of body, senses, mind, intellect and soul. The description of educational system in Adhyatma Ramayana reveals that such a system of education existed in those times.

In Lakshmanopadesam, the evils following a person acting on the basis of emotion are very clearly illustrated.

A unique nature of ancient Indian education is the glorious relationship between the teacher and the disciple and the ‘Nature’ based education. Here ‘Nature’ means two aspects—one the innate nature of the pupil i.e., intelligence, aptitude, attitude, ability, and personality factors and second external
nature or natural environment. The formal education was imparted at Gurukula or the household of the teacher who was invariably a hermit residing at the hermitage situated in the forest. This gave a peaceful and enchanting atmosphere where the pupils bathed in the crystal clear water and kept companionship with deer and other animals in the forest. The isolation from the urban life gave an opportunity for concentration in their study because distractions were very few. Further the disciplined life of the hermitage trained them in high thinking and simple living. The hermit was a role model for them. In Adhyatma Ramayana there are plenty of descriptions of hermitages managed by great sages like Vasishta, Valmiki, Agastya, Sutheeshna, Bharadwaja etc. The description of these hermitages are very charming because they are located in ideal grounds near small rivulets and surrounded by beautiful trees and creepers and lovely flowers and green foliages.

The sanctity of teacher pupil relationship and the ideal setting of the hermitages that served, as the centres of education are the unique characteristics of ancient Indian education. Gandhiji while framing the details of ‘Basic Education’ as a suitable education system for free India has
adopted these principles. Gandhiji’s definition of teacher as an approved agent of society for social change and education as a process for social change and the concept of education as a process of self-supporting are evidences that education is purely a human service which involves no financial burden on the student or his parents. Further Gandhiji’s concept of ‘Rural University’ is but an extension of old Gurukula system conducted in the hermitages. This may serve as a message for education for the 21st century, which is facing the grave problem of dehumanisation of education due to globalization and commercialization.

5.3. CONCLUSION

Main conclusions of this study reveal that Adhyatma Ramayana is reflecting a comprehensive system of education integrating temporal and spiritual education as summarised below:

1. Adhyatma Ramayana reveals the natural and effective integration of the informal, non-formal and formal approaches of education.
2. According to Adhyatma Ramayana the ultimate aim of education is Mukthi or liberation from the ignorance and sorrows of worldly life. Mukthi also means the attainment of perfection by realising Brahman or the Ultimate truth.

3. Even though Paravidya or the spiritual education is the most desirable aim, Aparavidya or worldly knowledge is also considered necessary for a balanced life. Hence Aparavidya or the education in the worldly sciences is also included as an essential part of education.

4. The basic aim of education is to acquire the concept of Dharma, which should be the basis for all other values of life, such as Artha, Kama and Moksha.

5. The content of education should be comprehensive consisting of temporal subjects related to the sciences or Vedangas and spiritual subjects like Vedas. In other words the content should contain both Aparavidya (temporal knowledge) and Paravidya (spiritual knowledge).

6. An ideal person is one who is not only aware of the rules of Dharma but also lives according to it. A perfect individual is a realised soul who controls his intellect by
self (Atman), the mind by the intellect, the senses by the mind, and the body by the senses.

7. Education should enable a person to suppress and sublimate his negative feelings like greed, disappointment, jealousy, and selfishness. It should help a person to develop universal love, compassion and self-sacrifice for the welfare of the world.

8. Education should be imparted according to the need and aptitude of the individual.

9. A student is expected to respect, love, and obey the teacher wholeheartedly. The teacher should love the students as his own children and try to help the all-round development of the personality of the disciple.

10. The duty of an ideal teacher includes not only the education of the young ones entrusted to him but also to guide the society and the rulers for the pursuit of Dharma. In this sense he is considered as a friend, philosopher and guide not only to the students but also to the society. In short he is actually a leader devoted for social change in the right direction.
11. Education should be related to the social and natural environment so that an individual can lead a happy life by adjusting himself with the natural and social environments.

12. In the social life, since Dharma is the basis of every action the household life (Garhashtya) is necessary for the creation of a new generation (Praja). Rathi or sex is only for the creation of ‘praja’. Dharma, Praja and Rathi are the ‘goals in social life’.

13. The educational ideas in Adhyatma Ramayana give top priority to international outlook and humanism.

14. Adhyatma Ramayana emphasizes the coordination of formal, informal and non-formal education in the total development of the personality. These different approaches should not be contradictory to one another but complementary and supplementary to each other.

15. Adhyatma Ramayana highlights the need for motivation in learning. The readers are motivated to a high level of devotion and seriousness in the introduction itself by picturing the narration of the story of Rama as a dictation
by Lord Mahesa, himself at the earnest request of Parvathi Devi. This creates a feeling and attitude of seriousness, sanctity and devotional attention among the readers.

16. Education as guidance of individual, by providing optimum conditions for the development of his innate potentialities is highlighted in Adhyatma Ramayana. Every individual has potential wisdom in him. The guide or the teacher has only to enable him to ‘manifest the divine perfection already existing in him.’

17. According to Adhyatma Ramayana there is a sacred and ideal relationship between the teacher and the disciple. The teacher is considered as the spiritual father of the student and the student is considered as the spiritual son of the teacher. The student lived with his teacher as a member of his family where the teacher educated the students without any remuneration.

18. The methods of learning are: self-enquiry, contemplation, discussion and project activity as directed by the teacher.
It was really learning by doing in the natural and social environment. Education was totally integrated with life.

19. It can be concluded that the applications of most of the principles of the Adhyatma Ramayana in Education may be an effective solution for the modern world to realise peace and happiness based on the eternal values of compassion, love and self-sacrifice.

5.4. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The qualities of an ideal woman and a man may be illustrated by the examples of Sita Devi and Sree Rama by including it in the relevant context of the curriculum.

2. Role models of a perfect ruler, son, father, mother, brother, wife, friend, teacher, student, servant and devotee may be illustrated by citing suitable examples from Ramayana for guidance of the pupils.

3. The study reveals the importance of the integrated approach for the all-round development of the personality through education. At present there is not only lack of co-ordination between formal, non-formal and informal education and also contradictions. Home, society and the
school should be made fully aware of the need for integrated approach.

4. Motivation of the non-formal agencies of education especially the printed media and audiovisual media are limited to financial gains. Media very often projects the anti-social activities, causing deterioration of value systems. There should be strict control over the publication of media to avoid negative impacts on value systems.

5. Awareness should be created among public, teachers and parents regarding the need for co-operation for imparting quality education for children.

6. Proper attention should be given to health education, physical training and yoga practice.

7. The elders should be clearly instructed to behave properly in the presence of children and young people. They should be role models for the young generation.

8. Training should be given for self-discipline.
9. From very early age the children should be made conscious of the chief aim of life and basic values.

10. Values should be inculcated by presenting moral stories through audiovisual media.

11. Training in co-operation, social service, and patriotism should be imparted. Training should also be given for rendering social service and participating in S.U.P.W.

12. Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanthi, U.N. Day etc. should be observed properly to understand its significance to develop proper attitudes of nationalism and universal brotherhood.

13. Teacher training should be reorganized with a view to integrating formal, non-formal and informal education.

14. Even from the very early period children should be assisted to identify the chief aim of life. They should be guided and counselled to identify the important human qualities necessary for a successful social life. The children should also be helped to identify and understand the rights and duties of a citizen.
15. One should be fully aware of his duties towards parents, family and society. The individual should ultimately develop in to a universal man with international understanding.

16. Pupil should be made aware of the fact that it is sacrifice, not selfishness, which distinguishes man from animals.

17. Training in Dharma should be given emphasis in the curriculum.

18. Content of education should consist both temporal and spiritual subjects.

19. Education should be student centered. The teacher should be the spiritual father of the disciple. Top priority should be given for selection for teachers who should be not only scholars in their subjects but also persons with aptitude for teaching and a high degree of personal integrity.

20. Awareness may be created for the mutual love and understanding between teacher and students.
21. Training in guidance and counselling should be given top priority in teacher education both at the pre-service and in-service stages.

22. Teacher should evaluate the student continuously and comprehensively. There should be no failure of students in education system.

23. Even after formal education the relationship of teachers with students should continue and the students should be helped through out the whole process of life. The teachers should be social engineers for positive social changes.

24. Education system should help a person to develop self-esteem along with his awareness of duties and rights in the society. One should have courage to fight against the evils in the society neglecting personnel gains and favours.

25. Awareness should be created that any work is dignified if it is related to one’s aptitude. No profession is superior or inferior.
26. The study of Ramayana should be included in the relevant part of the curriculum for inculcating the values of universal love, sacrifice, humanity, honesty and courage.

5.5. **SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES.**

1. A comparative study of educational ideas of Adhyatma Ramayana and Harinamakeerthanam.

2. A comparative study of educational ideas in Adhyatma Ramayana and Valmiki Ramayana.

3. A comparative study of educational ideas in Adhyatma Ramayana and Basic education with reference to the aim of Education advocated by Gandhiji.

4. A comparative study of educational ideas of Rousseau and Adhyatma Ramayana

5. How far the modern technology oriented education is justified in the light of philosophy of education in Adhyatma Ramayana

6. A comparative study of the significance of social education of Adhyatma Ramayana and Buddhist system of education.
7. A psychological study of the different types of personalities in Adhyatma Ramayana with reference to the aims and values in life.

8. The curriculum as envisaged in Adhyatma Ramayana and its significance in modern world.

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