CONCLUSION

CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO THE NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National Integration

The question of thinking in terms of National integration arises when there is a threat of disintegration. When there is harmony and unity there may not be a serious question of integration. Whenever there is disintegration and conflict among different sections of a national society there comes the question of national integration. In Indian context, by the term national integration, the reference is made to the cultural integration and not a political integration maintained by the Constitution and legal structure of the country. Constitutional and political integration etc is coercive in nature. Thus it is artificial. True integration must arise out of the minds of individuals who form national society. Indeed the integrating phenomena ought to come from within. The only source that enables this, is culture-spirituality combination. Thus for India the edifice of the unity of Indian union ought to be Indian culture and spirituality itself. This makes integration spontaneous and natural; and no force can destroy it, given the possibility that Indians remain conscious of Indian culture. Thus cultural awareness is the point from where the work towards integration ought to begin. Spirituality-culture combination is what Indians must be aware of. Let me quote the late Dr. Harsh Narayan of Lucknow.
Vivekananda was well aware of the strength of the Indian spirituality and weakness of the society existing around him. The conditions of India and were appalling to him. He felt that there were many fold evils which hampered India's growth and hastened its degeneration. The British colonial rule and their deliberate attempts to destroy Indian culture hastened the degeneration of Hindu society. The Indian society at that time, in a way, was authoritative. It did not allow the individual freedom and growth in social matters. The widespread economic poverty and ignorance of the masses moved him to tears. He was shocked to see that India was forgetting its National individuality, which is essentially spiritualism, by imitating the west in a servile way without discrimination. He traced India's backwardness, economic and social, in failing to establish cultural and scientific contacts with the rest of the world. Thus the problems he confronted in India were many and he bestowed his thought and activity in overcoming them by devising the ends and means of national reconstruction on spiritual and cultural basis. It was also in this aspect of national rejuvenation that Vivekananda carved out a high place for himself among the galaxy of leaders and thinkers of modern India. Grayson Kirk rightly mentions.
"If Vivekānanda came at a time when people were on the verge of becoming a little better prepared for more appraisal of each other, he also came at a time when his views on society could be of greatest help to his own countrymen."¹

After the Chicago Parliament of Religions (1893) Vivekānanda became confident of his spiritual mission and determined to reorganize society on the basis of Neo-Vedānta. In his triumphant march from Colombo to Almora, he spoke loudly of his social and political views on the Indian society and wake Indians from their long hybernation. K.S. Ramaswami Sastri explains the self confidence of Vivekananda in the awakening of the nation in the following words.

"The difference that I noticed between Vivekānanda of 1892 and Vivekānanda of 1897 was what struck me most. In 1892 he looked like one who had a tryst with destiny and was not quite sure when or where or how he was to keep the tryst. But in 1897 he looked like one who had kept that tryst with destiny, who clearly knew his mission and who was confident about its fulfilment."²

Vivekānanda believed that negative interpretation of Vedanta retarded the national growth and therefore he followed Sri Ramakrishna's Neo-Vedānta, which is also called practical Vedānta, to rejuvenate faith and strength in individual and society. He asserted that there could be no national growth without freedom, no monastic discussion without social service, and no spiritual progress without material freedom. He was concerned with practicing not negativism, but positivism. He was not
content with mere denunciation of national evils. Positively he encouraged individual and social growth and freedom.

In the task of national revival, the Anglicanized social reformers blamed the hold of religion on the masses for India’s social and economic backwardness. But Vivekananda made it clear that religion was not responsible for India’s degradation. On the contrary, he held that it was lack of religious approach that allowed the national evils to exist in one form or the other. Therefore to make society dynamic and preserve the purity of religion from superstitions, he pleaded the separation of religion from social matters. According to him.

“what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a religions law-giver”

About the sphere of religion he said

“The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow”

Thus Vivekananda offered constructive criticism of society without attacking and deracinating the national faith, ideas and institutions. While asserting for preservation of spiritual values Swamiji was never tired of emphasizing the need for making Hinduism aggressive. In the words of Swamiji.

My objective as regards India,
"had always been to make Hinduism aggressive. The eternal faith must become active, proselytizing, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate assimilation of new elements."

He felt intensely proud of being a child of the great Hindu nation and deep anguish at her present plight, and was determined to make Hindu Society strong, organized and aggressive.

"The Champion, of Hinduism in the present age was Swami Vivekananda, the ochre clad Generalissimo of the God-intoxicated master. They have infused a new spirit into the dead bones of our religion and have made the much abused Hindu, bold, strong and self confidant."

The above words of Sri Kamakhya Nathu Mitra indicates the situation of the Hindu society at the time of Swami Vivekananda and the work done by him to improve the condition of the Hindus. The abuse of the Hindu religion came from all section of the society. The combination of Macualay and Max Muller by their Aryan Invasion Theory and English education programme tried to wrest the cultural heritage of India by declaring that the Europeans were the forefathers of the Aryans. The intense proselytizing efforts of the Christian missionaries and indiscriminate imitation of the West by some national leaders have all lead to the pathetic situation of the Hinduism and the Hindus became mentally weak and this led to stagnation in the spiritual path. According to Vivekananda this stagnation should be overcome as the first requisite to social progress and freedom. In other words the Hindus should become
proud of their religion and should show vitalism both in spiritual and social matters. This vitalism and strength alone will lead to freedom.

Swāmijī categorically refused the Āryan invasion theory. He says:

“Wherever the Europeans find an opportunity, they exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on their lands; and therefore they conclude that the Āryans must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guesswork? Then keep your fanciful ideas to yourselves! In what Vēda, in what Sukta (Hymn) do you find that the Āryans came to India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you get by talking such nonsense?”

The social reformers of the day called Vivekānanda a revivalist and a reactionary as well, for his resuscitation of spiritual values to the body-politics of India. But it must be said that no individual and community can make progress and find the meaning and fulfilment of the ideal of life without pursuing the eternal spiritual values. The spiritual values form the fulcrum of the society and nourish its growth. Therefore Vivekananda reinterpreted scriptural values liberally. By this liberal interpretation he made scriptures accessible to all. He advocated the masses to take these scriptural values to become self-confident and bold—indeed bold enough to face the aggressor mentally and physically. Sister Nivedita in her introduction to the Complete Works of Swami Vivekānanda paid this glowing tribute to Vivekānanda for his liberal and enlightening interpretation of the scriptures:
"He stand merely as a Revealer, the interpreter to India of the treasure that she herself possess in herself. The truths he preaches would have been as true, had he never been born. Nay more, they would have been equally authentic. The difference would have lain in their difficulty of access, in their want of modern clearness and incisiveness of statement, and in their loss of mutual coherence and unity. Had he not lived, texts that today will carry the bread of life to thousands might have remained the obscure dispute of scholars. He taught with authority and not as one of the Pandits. For he himself had plunged into the depths of the realization which he preached; and he came back like Rāmānuja only to tell its secrets to the pariah, the out caste, and the foreigner."

The westernized elite of the day showed extreme disregard to the traditional spiritual values of the Hindu society in their blind imitation of the West. They tried to propagate these Western values, of course with the support of the ruling authority. Due to the joint effort of the Christian missionaries, British Government and the Anglicized elite, the average Hindu was in dilemma. He was unable to make a selection between traditional Hindu values and modern western values. To the confused masses of Hindu society, Vivekānanda, categorically asserted:

"Our Life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social and other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure."

His appeal to the masses was not in vain. He succeeded in his effort to prevent the masses from being Anglicanized. His effort to inculcate self confidence and respect to traditional value among the masses succeeded to a great extent. For regeneration of the Hindu
society Swāmi Vivēkānanda had given us a definite scheme of work, which according to Swami Nikhilānanda is as follows.

"The great danger that threatens us at present is the right apprehension of the gradual disappearance of our race by the steady dwindling away of the number of Hindus through conversions to other religions, due to a great extent, to the working of some of our own iniquitous laws. Our first duty is to put an immediate stop to this work of conversion and reclaim those, with all honors, that want to come back to Hinduism. We must broaden the Hindu society by changing our present angle of vision and treating everyone down to the chandālas as component and useful parts of Hindu society."

Vivēkānanda wanted to make the Indian society dynamic by liberal interpretation of her spiritual values. He wanted India to recapture the eternal spirit of the Veda. He hoped that India would maintain the balance between the orthodoxical stability and the modern outlook. However between religious orthodoxy and modernism, he stood for orthodoxy.

"There are two main obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charitbdis of modern European civilisation. Of these two, I love for the old orthodoxy, and not for the European system."

The religious orthodoxy was firm in its faith and steadfast in devotion to its ideals. It probed into problems of life, solved them and maintained social stability. But modern India, which was a product of the Western impact, was imitative, rootless, skeptical and dithering. It was not anchored to anything and reduced life to a vacuum. Vivekananda pointed out the futility of reshaping India in a western mould. India of his time was moving hither
and thither. It required a firm anchor to hold on to its ideals and Vivēkānanda provided the ideals by reviving faith in religious values of India.

The superiority of the knowledge of the Vēdaś was accepted by all religious sects in India. Vivēkānanda felt that the spiritual unity of India could be maintained easily and spontaneously by accepting the Vēdas as the common source and inspiration for all. He pointed out that even Buddhism and Jainism did not condemn the knowledge portion of the Vēdaś, but they only repudiated the deformities and abominable practices of the vedic religion. Dayananda Saraswathy was also of the same view as far as spiritual unity of India was concerned.

"The demand for new India was not for a new sect: it was for a universal religion acceptable to all Hindus. The first effort to provide such a basis was Dayananda Saraswathy who saw in the Vēdas the revealed word of God and felt that, as the Vēdaś were acceptable by all who claimed to be Hindus, religion based on Vēdaś should have universal appeal in India" ⁷

Vivēkānanda's preference for Vedic religion instead of Hinduism is due to this universal appeal of Vēdaś. Thus to Vivekananda the common religious denomination would preserve and foster the spiritual unity of India. While accepting the universality of Vēdaś. Vivekananda encouraged the individual to rely on reason in all walks of life, either social, political or religious.

"By championing reason, Vivēkānanda emancipated the individual from the bonds of a hidebound life and diehard society" ⁸
Thus the effort of Swāmījī was to strengthen the spiritual unity of
the nation and to emancipate the individual from the diehard society.

Vivekānanda by his own individual nature and liberal nature held
the banner of liberal outlook and revolted against the tyranny of terrible
orthodoxy, let me term, the Hindu Decadence. Though he was a liberal in
his approach, was diametrically opposed to that of his contemporary
Indian liberals. The English educated liberals in India adopted merely a
negative attitude and attacked whatever evil they saw either in social or
religions life. They wanted to salvage India by complete break with the
past. Social reform was their desideratum and attributed social evils to
religion. But Vivekananda was of the view that religion was a
constitutional necessity of man. He felt that social reformers were wrong
in mixing social evils with religion. He made it clear that religion had
nothing to do with social evils. According to Panikkar, Vivekānanda’s:

"Unique contribution to the growth of liberal spirit in India was his
emphasis on the dissociation of social institutions from religion. He
proclaimed all over India the truth that such institutions as caste and
prohibitions like widow remarriage were merely social practices and were
fundamentally unconnected with Hindu religion. He emphasised that their
reformation was essentially a matter of social justice. This was indeed a
basic contribution to Indian liberal thought, for without this separation the
reform of Hindu society according to the liberal principles would not have
been possible."

The liberals preached reform but did nothing to ameliorate the
miserable condition of the poor, the illiterate and woman. Vivekananda
was of the view that service to the poor must be given precedence over reform. He wanted to awaken the people by preaching their inherent divinity and strength. As a liberal Vivekananda warned the individual not to be tied up to social and political institutions that hamper his growth. He said it was good to be born in a church but bad to die in it.

"To make it clear it is very good to be born in a certain sect and have its training - it brings out our higher qualities; but in the vast majority of cases we die in that little sect, we never come out, or grow."

He expected the young to imbibe the eternal values and the old to become more liberal in interpreting the values of life and adapting them to social and political institution, to serve the needs of society.

"Vivekananda's reaction to religious orthodoxy and liberalism shows that he was a liberal among the orthodox and an orthodox among liberals."

He was a class by himself in both schools and adapted himself ably well. He endeavoured to seek a proper co-ordination between liberalism and religious orthodoxy. By affirming liberalism he questioned social evils and infallibility of the scriptures. He favoured some kind of orthodoxy for the sake of social stability, as also for maintaining the eternity of spiritual values. He was ahead of liberals in championing in mass uplift and education, and was also abreast of religious orthodoxy. He insisted on positive, rational interpretation of scriptures.

"Neither orthodoxy nor westernism could hold him within its bounds. Even regarding the scriptural statements, he had his own views, and he refused"
to depend solely on the writings of the great commentators. Yet by his own outstanding personality, he carried all before him”.

According to Swāmījī no individual or community can make progress without freedom; and strength is necessary for freedom. He commanded the poor and the weak to resist tyranny in society. He advised the young.

"Be strong! Be manly! I have respect even for a wicked person so long as he is manly and strong, for his strength will make him some day give up his wickedness and even renounce all works for selfish ends, and will thus eventually bring him to the Truth”.

In the words of S.K. Raichanduri

"Swamījī wanted to build up a tower of self-confidence and strength in us to determine our own destiny whether in socio-political or spiritual life. He planted in us the great Yearning for freedom.”

At the time of Vivēkānānda the morale of India was weak. He wanted India to throb with strength. His concept of strength was identical with the primal energy or Śakti. He worshiped Śakti, for she pervades all aspects of life. The individual and nation must worship Śakti and every thing works according to her will. Therefore, to worship Śakti is to overcome weakness, to find identity with the many and, above all, to secure freedom. Vivēkānānda held that India had to aspire after the cultivation of Śakti.
"Without Sakti (power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries? Because Sakti is held in dishonour."

His concept of Sakti adored the philosophy of nationalists in India. Vivekananda himself initiated the worship of Mother India. His exposition of the Upanishads strengthened the national will for freedom and unity.

His propagation of strength and boldness at times sounded like a discourse on general morality, but his Indian audience was well aware of what he was talking about. Strength and boldness were necessary to struggle for India’s freedom. They contrasted with the politics of beggary.

Vivekananda perceived that India could be awakened socially and politically only by the ceaseless selfless activity as conceived in the Bhagavad Gita. His teaching and interpretation paved the way for the rise of militant nationalism in the minds of the people. Social life in India at that time was degenerated and immobile. He wanted to dispel India’s inertia, social misery and economic backwardness by means of selfless activity as enjoined by the Gita.

“The rediscovery of the Gita and diffusion of its activist teachings started with Bankimchandra and culminated in Vivekananda. In Bengal, at least, the influence of the Gita was owing to Vivekananda, not Tilak. Therefore, to credit Tilak with the pioneering role in this respect is to misread history.”

To make India dynamic and growing he expostulated the ‘Karma Yoga’ of the Gita in terms of selfless activity and freedom and resistance to injustice.
Vivekananda wanted India to be rejuvenated with selfless activity to attain social and political freedom. Though a man of renunciation, he prescribed activity to common man and monk alike to realise social and individual freedom. He said:

"Karma Yoga, therefore, is a system of ethics and religion intended to attain freedom through unselfishness and good works."

According to Vivekananda selfless activity inculcates the spirit of social equality and promotes social good and unity. Vivekananda viewed that freedom, activity and resistance were interrelated.

"Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical."

His advocacy of resistance to injustice naturally arises the question whether he advocated armed resistance against British rule. Some of his close relatives and followers believed that he was in favour of armed revolution. Vivekananda's brother Bhupendranath Dutta says:

"Very few people know that he had political revolutionary ideas in the beginning. He wanted to free the country from foreign yoke. But he failed in his attempt; and seeing the cause of his failure, he tried a different remedy and deflected his attention to another channel. The key to the new venue of his work for India lay here."

On being asked by sister Christine as to why he (Vivekananda) requested sister Nivedita to keep aloof from Indian politics, Vivekananda answered.
"What does Nivedita know of Indian conditions and politics? I have done more politics in my life than she. I had the idea of forming a combination of Indian princes for the overthrow of the foreign yoke. For that reason, from Himalayas to Cape Comorin I have travelled all over the country, for that reason, I made friendship with the gun-maker, Sir Hiram Maxim. But I got no response from the country. The country is dead."

In the words of Sisir Kumar Mitra:

"In 1939 Sri Aurobindo said that Vivekananda had his own ideas of political work and of revolution and that he visioned a revolutionary centre similar to the one at Maniktala garden in Calcutta." 57

But in the words of SL. Mukherjee:

"That Swami fervently wanted political independence of India is beyond any shadow of doubt, but the view that he wanted to achieve this by militant or terrorist means and made conscious efforts towards this can always be challenged." 28

Thus Swamiji’s role as a revolutionary may be controversial. But his impact on the nationalist movement is beyond doubt. In the words of A.V. Ratna Reddy:

"Whether he (Vivekananda) contemplated an armed revolution or not, it is beyond doubt that the Swami left an indelible impact on the armed revolutionary and pacifist in the struggle for freedom. He sowed the seeds of revolution on the mental plane and on the material it was nurtured by the doughty revolutionaries and Gandhi, the pacifist." 29

It may be said basing on Vivekananda’s philosophic speculation and experience and impression of India, that Vivekananda contemplated a revolution. To him, India was weak and inactive. It would be awakened
only by activity and activity meant resistance or strength. His repetitive
and emphatic utterances on strength became the gospel for the nation to
seek its own light and find freedom. In the words of Dr. V.P. Varma

"His concept of Strength and fearlessness which in terms of Political
philosophy can be called the theory of resistance".

He was merciless in his attack on weakness and wanted the weak
to became strong or lose their freedom for ever. As India was weak, she
was justified in offering resistance to the alien rule. By resistance alone
she would become moral, strong and free herself from hibernation and
delusion. As she was weak, she could not practice non-resistance which
is the attribute of the strong one. He was of the view that India deluded
herself, became hypocritical when she mused over the virtues of non-
resistance. Non resistance was not within the means of India. Therefore,
the only means for India was to girdle up her lions and face bravely the
challenge of overthrowing alien yoke. Freedom is as imperative as is its
perseverance and as sacrosanct as is resistance.

"Instead of talking about political freedom and social justice he
(Vivekananda) talked about a mere basic concept-strength. Without
strength we can neither preserve our individual existence nor can we fight
for the vindication of our rights. Only through sustained efforts and
constant perseverance can a person succeed in the struggle for existence.
Character develops through resistance to impediments. As a theorist and
teacher Vivekananda has given the country the ideal of fearlessness and
strength. The outstanding legacy of Vivekananda was that he reconciled
life and religion. He sometimes gives a rational, almost pragmatic definition of religion: strength is religion.\(^\text{31}\)

As a nationalist Vivekānanda worked for the spiritual renaissance of India and advocated India’s spiritual nationalism. Sri. Ramakrishna was the starting point of the spiritual renaissance of India and the advent of Vivekananda marked its apogee. In the words of prof. D.S. Sharma

“We have just a glimmering of the dawn about 1830 connected with the agitation of Rammohan Roy and the founding of the Brahmosamaj, but the actual dawn came only at the beginning of this century when along with nationalism came the renaissance of Hindu religion.”\(^\text{32}\)

Vivekānanda revived India’s spiritual legacy and made it pervade all activities of national life. His contributions

“have been diverse and have touched almost all the aspects of our national resurgence-political, social, cultural and spiritual.”\(^\text{33}\)

As the leading exponent of spiritual renaissance of India, Vivekānanda pioneered the past and present, traditionalism and modernism to mould modern India’s future. In the words of Pandit Nehru.

“Rooted in the past and full of pride in India’s prestige, Vivekānanda was yet modern in his approach to life’s problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.”\(^\text{34}\)

Swāmiji was a unifying force in Indian spiritual renaissance and there by the national revival
"The eternity of the Vedas, the strength of the Upanishads, the compassion of the Budha and the spirit of equality of Islam found a sonorous Echo in him in representing India’s renaissance."

He proclaimed that an Aryan, a Budhist, a Muslim, a dualist and a non-dualist Hindu were all Indians who inherited and enriched India’s spiritual legacy. According to Panikkar:

"This new Saṅkarachārya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology. Travelling all over India he not only aroused a sense of Hindu feeling but taught the doctrine of the universal Vēdānta as the background of new Hindu reformation.... It is Vivēkānaṭa who first gave to the Hindu movement its sense of Nationalism and provided most of the movement with a common all-India outlook."

Vivēkānaṭa ejaculated India’s self-respect and rejuvenated faith in her spiritual glory and unity. He urged his compatriots to disseminate her spiritual truths to the high and the low and expand her national institutions.

"By invoking the national ethos and touching the chords of her spirituality, he vindicated India’s spiritual unity and freedom more spontaneously and effectively than his social and religious contemporaries."

None of the Indian reformers before him conceived the idea of common nation on the grounds of spirituality. As Romain Rolland pointed out, Vivēkānaṭa

"Not only proved its unity by reason but stamped it up on the heart of India in flashes of illumination."
According to Vivēkānanda ‘That freedom is the same as God’ He stood foremost in pleading for India’s freedom. The contemporary reforming religious sects and social movements confined their thought and activity only to reform Hinduism and Hindu society.

“The so called reformation movements that were in the field were either unnational or antinational, leading the country away from her tradition and genius.”

They lacked the initiative and perspective of projecting a united India and creating national consciousness on the basis of spirituality. Their activities only conceived Vivekanda that they were ‘accelerating the process of India’s degeneration and denationalism.’

Vivēkānanda felt that social rigidity from within and the enervating though alluring waves of alien culture from without sounded India’s denationalism. He was critical of the aglicanised social reformers and the Britons who attempted to Europeanise India. The reformers who were under the hypnotism of superiority of western culture and civilization gleefully and brazenly aped westernism in thought and activity which only hastened the loss of India’s self-respect. Vivēkānanda did not spare even the Ārya samajists and Brahmōists for the stigma of blandishing Britain. He condemned them that

“they were only voices of apology to our English masters.”
Vivekananda was of the view that enslaved India could be liberated neither by social reform nor by political means but only by religious revival. He pointed out that in India:

"social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants - its spirituality." 43

He also reminded the social reformers that her religious teachers maintained social dynamism by weeding out social evils without attacking her national institutions and beliefs. Therefore, he believed that the remedy for India’s degradation was not social reform but religion which encouraged individual and national growth. The Christian missionaries, in their efforts of proselytisation attacked Hindu religion from all quarters and attributed the cause of social evils to the Hindu religion. Vivekananda strongly opposed this view.

"I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it should have been." 44

The impact of Vivekananda on the Indian psyche confronted the missionaries with a serious problem.

"What the missionaries faced in India, roughly between 1890-1910 was a religious revival and awakened nationalism, which praised and idolised everything Indian. The educated Hindu, to a great extent, came to believe that Hinduism and Indian civilisation were purely spiritual and good and Christianity which was the religion of the foreign rulers was materialistic and therefore unsuited to the soil of India. Vivekananda and others had
declared that it denationalised the converts, it produced hatred for things Indian and engendered reverence for western materialism.45

Vivekānanda believed that social evils could be eliminated by mass education. He made it clear that religion and reform should not meddle in each other’s affairs. Vivekānanda also held that Britain came to India not to fulfil but to destroy India’s national faith and institutions. He surveyed that their cultural impact on India was glutinous with ‘mounts of broken brandy bottles’46. He also studied its rule and questioned its administrative methods. He pointed out that Britain provided neither good government nor retained the well established local self government but only offered an indifferent bureaucratic government. He described it as follows:-

“This is the state of things- even education will no more be permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already (of course we have been disarmed long ago) the bit of self government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off, we are watching what next.”47

He was of the view that British government in India was avowedly anti-democratic and anti-national. Continuity of British rule indicated to him further disfiguring of national life and its institutions.

Thus keeping in view the repercussions of social Anglicanism and alien rule, Vivekānanda exhorted that the programme of national revival should be chalked out with moderation. He pointed out that it must avoid the extremes of national fanaticism of religions and social orthodoxy and alien infatuation.48 It should take the middle course, that is it must retain
its national individuality and with an open mind to learn things from others for her growth. According to Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda was the leading and powerful exponent of ‘this preservation by reconstruction’ in the words of Dr. Majumdar.

“the conflict between the thesis represented by the Anglican reformists, and the anti-thesis represented by the reactionary Hindus was resolved by the synthesis propounded by Swami Vivekananda, which has been accepted as the basis for the evolution of modern India.”

Vivekananda believed that limited rigidity and flexibility should be adopted in the process of national revival. He stood for the growth and not replacement of her national soul or individuality. He advised his country men.

“Stand on your feet, and assimilate what you can, learn from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our national ideals.”

Of all the mentors of Indian Renaissance, Vivekananda propagated with untiring energy and enthusiasm the incandescent spirituality of India which constituted her national growth and vitality. Perhaps no one before him ever evoked the latent nationalism as he and no Indian nationalist prior to him regarded religion as a panacea for India’s manyfold problems. According to Swami Shraddhānanda,

“His was a programme of constructive and practical nationalism which could be worked out without waiting for the political freedom of the country.”
To the inactive, exclusive and degenerated India, he showed the heights of its majestic culture, and philosophy and the depth and eternity of its spiritualism. He infused faith and strength into the nation. Subhash Candra Bose evaluated his impact as follows:

"Though the Swami never gave any political message, everyone who came into contact with him or his writings developed a spirit of patriotism and a political mentality. So far at least Bengal is concerned, Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of modern nationalist movement."

The above quotation clearly envisages the role played by Swamiji for the national revival and cultural integration of India. According to Swamiji then prevailing mood of national weakness was not only anti-national but also anti-religious. He pointed out that the Upanishādz blazoned out freedom and fearlessness. Therefore, he flooded India with the Vēdāntic message of strength, fearlessness and freedom. Thus Vivekānanda held that India would became dynamic and strong by cultivating faith in her Vēdānta, the impersonal religion. His intense nationalism was a product of his innate religion. He held Vēdānta as a universal religion.

Swāmiji pointed out that India’s religious disunity rather than diversity constituted a grave menace to national unity. He was of the view that the reforming religious sects in India suffered from schematic outlook and prevented the growth of national unity. Therefore, the Swamiji felt that religious conflicts must give place for concurrence, diversity for unity.
"The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. This is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia religious ideas form the national unity. The unity in religion therefore is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India."\(^5\)

To achieve national unity, he devised the concept of common religion. According to Swāmījī, recognition of common religion was absolutely essential for India’s unity. His concept of common religion incorporates the common principles of diverse religious sects. Swāmījī is not opposed to religious sects. He conceded that religious sects may retain their identity but they should not threaten national unity. His concept of common religion is based on equality and coordination of faiths.

"Thus Vīvēkānānḍa wanted to strengthen the nation by infusing unity between the ‘brain’ of Brāhmaṇ and the heart of Buddhist, the Islamic body and Vēdāntic brain, and an European society with India’s religion."\(^5\)

Thus his concept of common religion is all inclusive and lasting. The reason behind the appeal for common religion is the cultural integration of India which has been severely damaged by the deliberate policies of the alien rulers. He was the leading force behind the Hindu revivalism and thereby the national resurgence during the 19th century.

In the words of Śrī Aurābindō

"The visit of Śwāmī Vīvēkānānḍa to America and the subsequent work of those who followed him, did more for India than a hundred London congress could effect. That is the true way of awakening sympathy, by showing ourselves to the nations as a people with a great past and ancient
civilization who still possess something to give the world and therefore
deserve freedom- by proof of our manliness and fitness, not by
mendicancy" 56.

Jawaharlal Nehru describes the impact of Swāmījī in the following words.

"He came as tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave
it self reliance and some roots in the past."

His opposition to the policy of ‘mendicancy’ his appeal to Shakti
and his theory of resistance to injustice deeply influenced the militant
nationalist like Tilak and Bibin Chandra. It was due to his influence in the
nationalist movement that Netaji Subash Chandra Bose described him as
‘The spiritual father of modern nationalist movement’

According to Swāmī Raṅganathānanda,

“He subtle influence inspired the nation to fight for political freedom to work
for revolutionary social changes, to establish a truly Vedantic humanist
society. This silent education prepared the nationalist mind to accept the
revolutionary social changes through political action such as Travancore
Temple entry Proclamation, a fraction of which would have resulted in civil
wars in any other society; this led up to the nation accepting the vast social
changes initiated in the Indian constitution in 1950. And in the utilization of the
political freedom won, Vivēkānanda’s impact, subtle but potent, can be seen
in the same direction of a vedantic harmonist socio-political order. In this
particular field, other influences are also at work, like the Marxist, but the
uniqueness of Vivekananda’s influence is that when Marxist and other
influences have worked out their possibilities and cease to inspire.
Vivekananda’s ideas will continue to inspire and influence, with greater and
greater force, for centuries to come”58.
In the words of AL Basham

"It is very difficult to evaluate his importance in the scale of world history. It is certainly far greater than any western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested. Events which have occurred since then suggest that, for centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world (especially as far as Asia is concerned, and one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian Religion) comparable in importance to such great men as Shankara and Ramanuja. I believe also that Vivekananda will always be remembered in the world's history, because he virtually initiated the counter attack from the East. Since the days of the Indian missionaries who travelled in South East Asia and China, preaching Buddhism and Hinduism more than a thousand years earlier he was the first Indian religious teacher to make an impression outside India."59

In the words of VKR Rao,

"Though not in politics, Swami Vivekananda has played a great role in the shaping of modern India, second if not equal to the role played by the God-conscious patriot Mahatma Gandhi who followed him. Secularism, socialism mass uplift and mass power, women's liberation, abolition of untouchability, inclusion of social service as a part of religious worship, Hindu-Muslim unity, universal literacy and informal education- all these constitute the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the building of modern India."60

Commenting on the impact of Swāmiji, Aurobiudo observed

"Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working giganticly, we know not well how, know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something genuine, grand, intuitive upheaving that has entered that soul of India and we say 'behold Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his mother and the souls of her children"61.
Thus Vivēkānanda’s role in the Nation building is beyond any doubt. He was the soul behind the nationalist movement.

The threat to the Hinduism from the foreign missionaries and rulers like Macaulay were successfully prevented and defeated by him. At the same time his Vēdāntic humanistic ideas provides for social coherence and religions tolerance. His silent education prepared the national mind to accept revolutionary social changes.

To conclude, we may quote Sri. Rājagopālāchāri. He says.

“Swāmi Vivēkānanda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him, we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swāmi Vivēkānanda. May his faith, his courage and his wisdom ever inspire as so that we may keep safe the treasure we have received from him”62
Reference

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