

Swami Vivekanand's 'The Secret of Work' Study in Postcolonial Perspective

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Abstract:

India has a long tradition of story telling. The Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jatakas, Vetala Panchavinshati and Katha-Sarit-Sagara are perennial sources of stories. The style and technique of narration is also unique in that these stories are linked together by the frame-narrator, with one story leading on to the other and holding the interest of the reader/listener. But, though these stories in oral form reigned long and supreme, they cannot fall in the category of the 'novel'. The novel came into existence in India in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indians started writing fiction in the Indian regional languages as well as in English. Members of the Dutt family (who published their poetry in The Dutt Family Album, 1870) are credited with writing the earliest Indian English fiction. Kylas Chunder Dutt's A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945 was published in the Calcutta Literary Gazette in 1835, while Shoshee Chunder Dutt's The Republic of Orissa : A Page from the Annals of the 20th Century was published in 1845 (Chavan 4).

Key words: Post-independence, spiritual help, physical help, intellectual help, etc.

The term 'postcolonialism' has created debates. It has been differently written such as 'post-colonialism' and 'postcolonialism'. The first one refers to a particular historical period which starts after the end of colonialism. The second term refers to 'forms of representations, reading methods, and values that move across past and present.' (Kulkarni & Chaskar 224)

Taking the above view in consideration, we can apply 'postcolonialism' to Indian writers whose writing both in English and Indian vernacular is the distinct product of Indian soul and psyche. It manifests creative writings in English language by the Indians. In the recent past Indian Writing in English has attracted a widespread interest, both in India and abroad. It has come to be realized of great significance in world-literature. Once called Anglo-Indian Literature and then Indian Writing in English is evidence of hesitancy and colonial mentality. At present, it has happily evolved into an honourable and reputable component of World Literature written in English. As a result it is increasingly being realized that literature being written in India is in no way inferior and that the writers in this country have contributed substantially and significantly to the modern English literature. At the outset, Indian English Literature displayed the specific impact of British Literature. It was not given an exclusive position by scholars and critics as well as readers by regarding as a mere subsidiary and subaltern of English Literature. But at the present scenario, it has acquired matchless position. Of course, the unlimited credit goes to the distinguished Indian masters and muses, who have fragranced the ideal power of pen by the amazing variety. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurbindo, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Nadiu, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and a host of other luminaries paved the thoughtful way for Indian Writing in English (Chavan 3).

Pre-independence Indian writers particularly Swami Vivekananda is confronted with a galaxy of themes. Their intensely natural and overwhelming favourite theme is moral sensibility. Their colourful narration is an emotional experience of deep meditation and systematic exploration of their self is discussed in many of his narrations.

Swami Vivekanand's original name is Narendranath Datta. He has completed his education in Calcutta. At the age of 21 he came in contact with his Spiritual Guru Shri. Ramkrushna Paramhans at Dakshineswar. He has decided to devote his life to service of mankind. His preaching prompts peace and brotherhood and his often presented his thoughts in beautiful poems. Vivekananda was powerful orator both in English and Bengali. Majority of his published works are the compilation of his lectures give delivered around the world. He was a singer and poet who has composed many songs and poems.

In the extract titled, 'The secret of Work', is taken from Vivekananda's 'The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II'. It tells us about the importance of spiritual help given to mankind to remove miseries from the world. According to Swami Vivekananda the lack of spiritual knowledge and the addiction of want lead man to misery. So we must help needy people physically but the best help we can give them is spiritual help.

Swami Vivekananda has very significantly spoken about the nature of help we can extend to needful persons. He has categorized the help in three sections - spiritual help, intellectual help and physical help.

According to Vivekananda physical help may remove the physical needs of the needful person for some time. But his needs and wants may come back to him soon. We cannot provide the physical help and remove the wants of person permanently. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit these wants can be removed from the person permanently. He who gives spiritual knowledge is the greatest benefactor of the mankind. Spiritual help is the greatest help given to the human beings. Until there is spiritual strength in man, his physical needs cannot be well satisfied.

Next to the spiritual help comes the intellectual help. According to Vivekananda the gift of knowledge is the greatest gift than that of food or cloths. It is said that the real life of man consists of the knowledge. Vivekananda mentions that,

"Ignorance is death, and knowledge is Life..."

'Life without knowledge is of no value...' (Vivekananda).

Finally Vivekananda has spoken about the physical help we can extend to needy people. He states that physical help is of least important because it cannot give permanent satisfaction.

The misery that I feel, when I am hungry is removed by eating,
but hunger returns; my misery can cease only when I am satisfied
beyond all Want (Vivekananda).

Hence, wants never stop to torture human beings. The only solution over all his problems is to become spiritually strong and go beyond all the wants.

In this way, prolific post-independence Indian writer like Swami Vivekananda has intensely handled his favourite theme of inculcating moral sensibility in the world. According to Vivekananda the miseries in the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes his physical needs will always arise and miseries will always be felt and no amount of physical help will remove them completely. The only solution of the problem is to make mankind pure and spiritually strong and educate them. Then and then only miseries in the world will be ceased.

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