CHAPTER –I

EMERGENCE OF THE STUDY

"Educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done, all these ideal reforms will remain ideas only."-Swami Vivekananda

INTRODUCTION

Etymologically education is said to have been derived from Latin terms 'E' and Doco' which mean the art of leading out. The deviation may also be from the term 'Educere' which means the art of bringing up. Education is human endeavour. It is essentially confined to modification of human behaviour'. If the modification is to bring about 'desirable' changes in the behaviour of individuals, the word, desirable pertains to the philosophical question. Education is defined as influence effected by one set of individuals on another so as to enable the tatter to grow properly. Education is thus equated with guidance. Education is the fourth necessity for man after food, clothing and shelter, in today's competitive world. Education is indeed a powerful tool to combat the cut-throat competition that man is faced with at every juncture in life. The importance of education in India is indeed rising with passing time. Though India has always been a great source of learning for many years, it still needs to improve not just the quality of education but also the number of people being educated. One cannot neglect the impact of education in the human society. In fact, in today's world a person is not given importance if he/she is not educated. Education not only trains the human mind, but also helps us to take the right decision. It is through education that wisdom, knowledge and information can be received and spread all over the world. The literate population of a nation is also considered as important indication of the quality of human resource. Therefore education is a must if a nation aspires to facilitate growth and development and more importantly wants to sustain it. The fact that developed nations of the world have high literacy rate and productive human resource is a good enough indication of this. Many of these nations have also started imparting their human resource with selective training and education programs in order to meet the rising technical and business demands.

EDUCATION IN INDIA – PAST AND PRESENT

Education in India has many facets, many of which have been forged by different institutions that existed from historic times to the present day. The education system that existed in old India was unique and some of its components and underlying principles are still found in places in the country. Contemporary education is more or less fashioned as per western education models and systems. There are two things unique about education in India – the diversity represented in the content that further contains different elements like traditions, culture, language, dialect etc. The second thing unique about education in India is a popularly inherited system that has evolved over the years into a unique entity.

EDUCATION IN INDIA: PAST

A well-established education system existed in India even in ancient times. There were old brahminical schools where theology, philosophy, arts, military education, public administration etc., was taught to the students. One major drawback about these schools was that education in India was a privilege and only children belonging to higher castes were allowed to receive education. Ancient schools of India were mostly residential schools. The teacher and pupils stayed together till the education was completed. Education at that time was free; however students returned the favours by helping the teacher in daily chores. The teacher or Guru was the central figure and revered by all. In contemporary times, the great respect teachers and schools enjoy are somewhat related to the great honour bestowed in ancient times. There were no books and recorded medium of passing over the knowledge. Whatever was taught was taught verbally and knowledge passed from the teacher to students and so on.

EDUCATION IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

In Medieval India, new elements got fused in education as foreign invaders brought with them their culture, their teachings and their lifestyle. The growing influence of Islam also led to the establishment of schools for Muslims. Again education primarily focused on theology. Thus two types of schools – the Vedic schools and Madarasas, were dominantly present in the Pre-colonial India.

EDUCATION IN INDIA: COLONIAL PERIOD

In the pre-colonial period, India was not a strong nation in principle. The region comprised separate small states that were often engaged in territorial disputes. Meanwhile, the renaissance period and great developments of the 14th, 15th and 16th century in Europe led them to explore new lands and further their movements. It was the time when missionaries started arriving in Asia and later in India. After the occupation of Indian states, the British, who had occupied a large part of India, felt the need to directly communicate with appointed officials. The interpreter or messenger system characteristic of the pre-existing monarchs came to an end, and British officials made English language necessary for Indian officials; which was intended to help them in administration. From time-to-time in the colonial period, stress was laid on English schools; which were to include content as was made in Western schools. The first English schools were seen as conspiracy measures to weaken the traditions and popular culture of Indian states. However, a few reformers cashed in on the opportunity and imbibed some essential traits, which later on changed the entire structure of the Indian education system.

MODERN EDUCATION – FROM THEOLOGY TO SCIENCES

In the post-colonial period, the knowledge and great achievements by European states shifted the focus of education on sciences and popular studies that were being taught and learned in European countries. British left India in 1947, but the education system remained, though some reforms were incorporated in it. The popular school system, formal education, progressive learning, higher studies and even the content was inherited. In the post-independence period, the government, renowned educationists, social scientists and many leaders stressed on making the education India centric, with focus once again on the popular culture and traditions. But now there were slight differences, as both Western and our indigenous models got mixed up to shape into an altogether different entity. Thus, education in India got shaped by influences and institutions in various periods, throughout the history.

The present day education system in India has come a long way and the age old traditions have undergone a makeover to produce an ecosystem that is evolving every single day.

The education system in India can be classified as:

•Pre primary education in India:

Pre-primary school education in India is not a fundamental right and is divided into two levels – Lower KG (for children between 3 and 4 years) and Upper KG (for children between 4 and 5).

•Primary Education in India:

This serves as the link between primary school and elementary education. However, not much emphasis is laid on this level by the prevailing education system and policies in this regard continue to exist solely on paper.

•Elementary Education:

The Government has made elementary education compulsory for children between the age group of years 6 and 14.

•Secondary Education in India:

Serves as link between elementary and higher education in the Indian education setup, which draws a blank again as far as policy is concerned.

•Higher Education in India:

Undergraduate and postgraduate level: After completion of secondary education, students can choose fields of their interest and pursue undergraduate and then post graduate courses.

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SCHEME OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Ramakrishna Math and Mission have before them, the explicit directions of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) regarding the aim as well as the technique of educational work. If these are faithfully worked out, the organisation will be able to evolve a particular pattern of its institutions suited to the genius and cultural tradition of our people and capable of meeting the present requirements of our country. Swamiji defined education as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. Ramakrishna Mission institutions, therefore, have exerted their best

to bring out the latent potentialities of the pupils, and thereby see to their all-round growth.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: SERVICE TO THE HUMANITY – A BRIEF PROFILE

Swami Vivekananda established Ramakrishna Mission as commanded by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, for the secular and spiritual amelioration of humankind as a whole, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, nationality, gender or religion. The twofold aim of the Ramakrishna Mission is, in Swami Vivekananda's own Sanskrit slogan, atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha ("For one's own spiritual emancipation and for the welfare of the world") To achieve this aim at both the individual and the collective level, he established the Ramakrishna Mission, by which he "set in motion machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody." Swamiji envisioned it as "a lever for the good of humanity ... which no power can drive back". Swami Vivekananda made Belur Math the headquarters of the worldwide Ramakrishna Movement, comprising the twin organizations of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. He envisioned that Belur Math would be a centre of great harmony and synthesis, not only of all religious beliefs and traditions, but also of arts and sciences and the various branches of knowledge, both secular and spiritual. In fact, on 2nd July 1902, just two days before he passed away, he prophesied, standing at the Belur Math grounds: "The spiritual impact that has come to Belur [Math] will last fifteen hundred years, and it will be a great University. Do not think I imagine it; I see it".

It is apparent that Swami Vivekananda's conception of a "University" is a centre where 'man-making' and character-building education would be imparted, higher values would be inculcated and all-round personalities would be formed. His own conception of a complete, all-round personality was one with "heart to feel, brain to conceive and hands to work". Swamiji's emphasis on character as the hallmark of an educated person is well known. He emphasized times without number that education is not the "amount of information that is put into your brain" but the "life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." In 1939, the Governing Body of Ramakrishna Mission took a small step in this direction by starting an institution of higher education near Belur Math

called Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira. The name 'Vidyamandira' is Swamiji's own christening of the educational institution he wanted near Belur Math. Then, in 1963, Swami Vivekananda's birth centenary year, the authorities of Ramakrishna Mission submitted a proposal to the Government for the starting of the Vivekananda University.

For various reasons, however, the university did not materialize at V V that time. Efforts in this direction were made off and on in subsequent years until finally, a deemed university under University Grants Commission (UGC) was established under Ramakrishna Mission's auspices. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, declared the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute (RKMVERI)—later renamed Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University—under the aegis of Ramakrishna Mission, as a deemed-to-be university under Section 3 of UGC Act, 1956. This Institute was subsequently renamed as 'Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University' with the approval of UGC. It staggers one's imagination to actually see how the University has blossomed already within the space of just five years. Headquartered at Belur as Swamiji wished, it began in July 2005 with just one branch in the Specialized Faculty Centre at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu in the unique field of 'Disability Management and Special Education'. The very next year, the first anniversary of the University Foundation Day, 4 July 2006, saw three more branches being added: the three 'off-campus' centers in the other 'thrust areas' began their journey. University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, accorded their approval to these three 'off-campus' centers and the then minister in charge of human resource development ministry of the Central Government announced this at the foundation day ceremony on 4th July 2006 at Belur Math. These centers were:

•Faculty of 'Integrated Rural Development and Management' (IRDM) at Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, Kolkata, West Bengal,

•Faculty of 'Integrated Rural and Tribal Development and Management' (IRTDM) at Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi (Morabadi), Jharkhand,

•Research in Indian culture and philosophy, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda thought vis-à-vis modern trends in socio-political thought, Vedanta in all its aspects, comparative religion, Vedanta vis-à-vis modern science, consciousness studies, translation studies and so on, at the Vivekananda Research Centre at Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral House, Kolkata, West Bengal. Close on heels to the above development; namely, the starting of the 'off-campus' centers at Narendrapur, Ranchi and Swamiji's own birthplace in Kolkata, came another remarkable development--another pet dream of Swamiji realized. Swami Vivekananda's passion for Sanskrit as well as for fundamental science is well known. Further, the combination of the best elements of the East and the West was Swamiji's favourite dream. In fact, he is said to have told Swami Premananda, his dear brother-disciple, on the very day of his mahasamadhi on 4th July 1902 that "on the lands of Belur should be established a University that would keep the ancient Indian traditional wisdom intact and harmonize it with the modern scientific knowledge". In pursuance of this grand wish of this great rishi of the modern age, two Schools have been started at the Belur main campus. One, the School of Mathematical Sciences devoted to three important areas of fundamental science, namely, pure mathematics, theoretical physics and theoretical computer sciences--areas which receive little attention in most Indian Universities. Two, the School of Indian Heritage, devoted to Sanskrit Studies, ancient Indian scientific heritage and Vedanta, particularly the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

Conceptually, these two Schools have been placed alongside each other to create a natural and unconscious blend of thought as Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) envisioned. Interestingly, the physical structures housing these two Schools are mirror images of each other, declaring even at the physical level the unique blend of the East and the West that Swamiji wanted. Swamiji also desired a college for teaching comparative religion and Vedanta in all its phases, the Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita aspects. The University is therefore establishing a third School, namely, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, wherein are being started teaching and research in Bengali Studies, Philosophical Studies and Economic Studies. All the aspects of Vedanta and comparative religions will also be some of the main subjects of study in this

School. Swami Vivekananda's emphasis on man-making and character-building education is always being kept in view in all the programmes and courses of study in the University bearing his hallowed name.

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are worldwide, non-political, non-sectarian spiritual organizations which have been engaged in various forms of humanitarian, social service activities for more than a century. Inspired by the ideals of renunciation and service, the monks and lay devotees of the Math and Mission serve millions of men, women and children, without any distinction of caste, religion or race, because they see the living God in them. The organizations were brought into existence by Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the great 19th century saint from Bengal who is regarded as the Prophet of the Modern Age, and Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), one of the foremost thinkers and religious leaders of the present age, who is regarded as 'one of the main moulders of the modern world', in the words of an eminent Western scholar A.L. Basham. Although Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are legally and financially separate, they are closely inter-related in several ways and are regarded as twin organizations. These twin organizations have set in motion a non-sectarian, universal spiritual movement which has been silently working for more than a hundred years to catalyze spiritual regeneration of humanity. The chief catalyst in this ongoing transformation is India's ancient religious philosophy known as Vedanta. Although several other systems of philosophy arose in India at different times, they were confined to small groups. Vedanta alone has remained dominant philosophy of India's religious tradition from Vedic times to present day. In modern times this ancient system of thought has been purified, unified and energized by Sri Ramakrishna, and expounded in the modern idiom by Swami Vivekananda and thus made available to all people all over the world without any distinctions of caste, creed or race.

The Ramakrishna Order does not believe in conversion, nor does it indulge in the occult or the sensational. The Order places utmost importance on personal spiritual unfoldment and selfless service. Inspired by the idea of the harmony of all faiths, its centers encourage adherents of different faiths to meet in a spirit of friendship and mutual appreciation, and to learn from one another

without having to give up one's own faith. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, lives and countries ... all doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole-hearted devotion".

Headquarters: The headquarters of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are situated at an area named Belur in the district of Howrah, West Bengal, India. The entire campus of the headquarters is popularly known as 'Belur Math'. Sprawling over forty acres of land on the western bank of the river Hooghly (Ganga), the place is an hour's drive from Kolkata The ideology of Ramakrishna Math and Mission given above finds expression through their multifarious activities. These activities cover different areas of human need and social welfare such as education, health, rural development, self-employment, women's welfare, inter-faith understanding, moral life, spiritual guidance, and relief to victims of calamities, all these activities are conducted as service, service to God in man. In the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, service is not restricted to a particular type of activity conducted at a particular time, but is a way of life. Even when monks are not doing any service in the outside society, they do service within the monastic community. And there is no time limit or age limit for this. The monks continue to engage themselves in various service activities until they are incapacitated by illness or extreme old age. The basic principles of this ideology are given below:

- God realization is the ultimate goal of life: One of the important discoveries made in ancient India was that the universe arises from and is sustained by infinite consciousness called Brahman. It has both impersonal and personal aspects. The personal aspect is known by different names, such as God, Ishvar, Jehovah and so on. Realization of this Ultimate Reality is the true goal of life, for that alone can give us everlasting fulfillment and peace.
- Potential divinity of the soul: Brahman is imminent in all beings as the Atman which is man's true self and source of all happiness. But owing to ignorance, he identifies himself with his body and mind and runs after sense pleasures. This is the cause of all evil and suffering. As

ignorance is removed, the Atman manifests itself more and more. This manifestation of potential divinity is the essence of true religion.

- Synthesis of the Yogas: The removal of ignorance and manifestation of inner divinity leading to God realization are achieved through Yoga. There are four main Yogas: Jnana Yoga (Yoga of Knowledge); Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of Devotion); Raja Yoga (Yoga of Meditation); Karma Yoga (Yoga of Work). Each Yoga is an independent means of realizing God. But since each Yoga involves the cultivation of one of the faculties such as reason, feeling or will, a combination of all the four Yogas is necessary for the development of a balanced, 'fully functioning' personality. It is this synthesis of Yogas that Swami Vivekananda regarded as the ideal of Ramakrishna Math and Mission. This ideal finds expression in the EMBLEM of the twin organizations shown here, which was designed by Swamiji himself. In the emblem the wavy waters represent Karma Yoga; the lotus flower represents Bhakti Yoga; the rising sun represents Jnana Yoga; the coiled serpent represents Raja Yoga; and the Swan represents the Supreme Self. The meaning of the ensemble is by the combined practice of all the four Yogas the Supreme Self is realized.
- Morality based on strength:According to Swami Vivekananda, weakness is the main cause of immorality, evil and suffering in life, and the cause of weakness is ignorance about one's true nature as the Atman. Knowledge of the Atman gives us tremendous strength to overcome our weakness and lead a virtuous life. Everyone is endowed with so many potentialities, but owing to fear and weakness, most of these potentialities remain unactualized. When, through knowledge of the Atman, fear and weakness are overcome, these potentialities manifest themselves. Swamiji called this process 'man-making education'.
- Harmony of Religions: Although the idea that 'one Reality is known by different names' (Vedas) and the idea that 'different spiritual paths lead to the same goal' (Gita) are found in the Hindu scriptures and in the teachings of several Hindu saints, Sri Ramakrishna was the first person in history to show through direct experience the transcendental unity of all

religions. His message implies two kinds of religious harmony: harmony within Hinduism and harmony among world religions.

- Harmony within Hinduism: Sri Ramakrishna did not identify himself with any particular sect of Hinduism but accepted Hinduism as a whole. He showed that Dualism, Non-dualism and other schools of Hindu philosophy represent different stages of the integral experience of Reality, and that the various Hindu Deities are different aspects of one supreme Godhead. His message has brought about a great deal of harmony among the Hindu sects, and Sri Ramakrishna himself has become the symbol of the unity of Hindu religion.
- Harmony among world religions:It should be noted that Sri Ramakrishna mrecognized the differences among religions but showed that, in spite of these differences, they lead to the same Ultimate Goal. This is the meaning of his famous maxim, Yato mat, tato path, "As many faiths, so many paths". Apart from this, Swami Vivekananda also held that the religions of the world are expressions of one eternal Universal Religion. Since Vedanta contains all the basic principles and laws of the spiritual world, Swamiji regarded Vedanta as that eternal Universal Religion. That is to say, Vedanta can serve as the common ground for all religions.
- Avatarhood of Sri Ramakrishna: According to the Hindu religious tradition, God incarnates himself as the Avatar in every Age in order to give a new message to humanity suited to the needs of each Age. In the Ramakrishna Movement, Sri Ramakrishna is adored as the Avatar of the Modern Age. What this means is that his life and teachings have opened a new way of salvation for humanity. The uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna's Avatarhood is that it embodies the spiritual consciousness of earlier Avatars and prophets, including those who are outside the Hindu fold, and is in harmony with all religious traditions. In all the institutions of the Ramakrishna Order, worshipful reverence is shown to all Avatars and the founders of all religions.
- A New Philosophy of Work: Swami Vivekananda has given a new philosophy of work for the modern world. All work in the Ramakrishna Math and Mission

is done according to this philosophy of work, which is based on the following principles:

- According to Vedanta, the physical universe is a manifestation of God known as Virat. Hence, as Sister Nivedita has stated, there is 'no distinction between the sacred and the secular'. What this statement means is that all work is sacred. Even menial work such as sweeping the floor or mending shoes is to be done with as much attention and devotion as work in the shrine.
- The Gita (18.46 & 9.24) states that the all-pervading God is the ultimate source of all work and the enjoyer of the fruits of all sacrifice. Hence all work is to be done as worship and the fruits of actions are to be offered to the Lord.
- One of the important principles Swami Vivekananda learned from his Master was Shiva Jnane Jiva Seva, 'to serve Jiva as Shiva'. Since man is potentially Divine, service to man is indeed service to God. Instead of looking upon a needy person as an object of pity, he is looked upon as an object of worship. Such an attitude elevates both the giver and the recipient.
- Swami Vivekananda was first religious leader in India to speak for the poor and downtrodden and to state boldly, 'He who sees Shiva in the poor, in weak and the diseased, really worships Shiva; and ... with him Shiva is more pleased than with man who sees Him only in temples.' It was Swamiji who coined the word daridra-narayana to refer to the poor. Swamiji's love and concern for the poor continues as a directive principle in Ramakrishna Mission's service programmes.
- When work, any work, is done fulfilling the above conditions, it becomes a spiritual discipline, the mind gets purified and the potential Divinity of the soul manifests itself more and more. Thus work done as worshipful service benefits the doer himself spiritually, it becomes a spiritual discipline or Yoga. It is with this understanding of work as a spiritual discipline (Karma Yoga) that all the service activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, such as giving food and clothing to the poor, nursing the sick etc, are undertaken. Thus service done as worship of God in man helps in two ways, it helps physically or mentally the person who

is served and it helps spiritually the person who serves. Many activities conducted by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are as given below:

- Relief and Rehabilitation Work: Right from 1857, when Ramakrishna Mission was founded, it has conducted extensive relief operations for the victims of natural disasters.
- Medical service: The Math and Mission have several hospitals, outdoor dispensaries are situated in cities, towns and even in little villages in the Himalayas and are meant primarily for the poor. The Math and Mission run 5 nurses' training centers where about 400 students are trained in nursing every year. Two old-age homes for men and one for women are maintained.
- Educational work: The Math and Mission run 748 educational institutions (including 12 colleges, 22 higher secondary schools, 41 secondary schools, 135 schools of other grades, 4 polytechnics, 48 vocational training centres, 118 hostels, 7 orphanages, etc) with a total student population of more than 200,000.
- Work in Rural and Tribal Areas: For rural and tribal people, the Math and Mission run 3 institutes of agricultural and 4 rural development training institutes. Besides, farmers are taught improved methods of cultivation and also provided with agricultural inputs and financial help. Projects such as construction of pucca houses, wasteland development, planting of fruit and forest tress etc. are undertaken. Drinking water is provided by digging bore wells and tube wells.
- Welfare work: Both the Headquarters and its branches provide scholarships and stipends to large number of students, medical aid to poor patients and monetary help to aged and destitute men and women.
- Activities for Youngsters:In all the educational institutions run by the Math and Mission special attention is paid to character-building and spiritual orientation of students. Apart from this, many of the branch centres conduct programmes for youngsters which provide recreational, cultural and spiritual activities for them at stated periods outside their school and college hours. The range of activities include chanting of hymns, devotional singing, participation in literary activities and games,

instruction on character-building and ethical life, telling stories about great people etc.

- Spreading Religion and Culture:This is accomplished through a large number of libraries, lectures, discourses and seminars, audio-visual units, exhibitions, museums, retreats and publishing books, journals etc. The Math and Mission publish 18 journals in 12 languages. Books on Vedanta, the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, spirituality and world religions in almost all the major languages of India and in some of the important languages of other countries are published from 21 publication centres. In English alone more than 700 titles are brought out. Hundreds of titles have been brought out in almost all regional languages, including some tribal languages.
- Spiritual Service: Almost every Math centre maintains a shrine dedicated to Ramakrishna where ritualistic worship is offered to Him every day. The most important form of spiritual service is diksha or spiritual initiation given by the President and Vice-Presidents of Ramakrishna Order to sincere spiritual seekers.
- Work outside India:The first centre of Ramakrishna Math in America was started by Swamiji himself in New York in 1884. Now there are 13 such 'Vedantic Societies' in the US. Outside the US also centres of Ramakrishna Math (and, in few cases, centres of Ramakrishna Mission) have come into existence, invariably at the initiative of local devotees, in many of the cities in the West and in the East. In the most centres outside India, except Bangladesh, the main type of service conducted is spiritual. The swamis in-charge of the centres give discourses, classes and lectures on Vedanta scriptures and the message of Sri Ramakrishna. Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda. Individual spiritual guidance is given to sincere seekers. The aim of this kind of service is to enable people to find ultimate fulfillment and meaning in life within their own socio-cultural and religious milieu. Ramakrishna Math and Mission do not conduct any kind of proselytizing activity.

Though the Math and Mission are closely related in as much as the Governing Body of the Mission is made up of the Trustees of the Math; the administrative work of the

Mission is mostly carried on by the Monks of the Ramakrishna Math; and both have their Headquarters at Belur Math (Kolkata, West Bengal). Though both the organizations take up charitable and philanthropic activities, the former lays emphasis on the training of the monastic members and religious preaching while the latter is related welfare service of various kinds with a spiritual outlook.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND A MODEL OF EDUCATION

Swami Vivekananda travelled through the whole of India on foot only to get acquainted with people of different regions. He was shocked beyond measure to find that large majority of people were living in utter poverty, ignorance, and superstition. What pained him most was that they had forgotten that they too were human beings and even had no desire to improve their lot. Like animals they patiently suffered and bore without protest all the hardships, humiliations and neglect the society thrust on them. Swamiji was grately moved and his only concern was how to make his countrymen conscious of the injustice and neglect to which they had been subjected for centuries and inspire them to rise and find their rightful place in the social order. Having studied the situation, Swamiji came to the conclusion that privilege and that this was the chief cause of India's ruin. If we are to rise again, Swamiji thought, we have to spread education among the masses. The only service to be rendered to them is to give education to help them regain their lost individuality. Swamiji's view was further reinforced when he visited America and other Western countries shortly after the completion of his Bharat Parikrama. He was moved to tears when he found how the common people of those countries had good food, good clothes, good houses to live in as compared to his own countrymen of similar status. He observed that Western people in general were conscious of their usefulness to society and hence lived a life of dignity. And the reason behind all this was that they had opportunities for education, which was altogether denied to the majority of people in India. The more he thought about these social differences, the more he became convinced that education should be given top priority in any programme for the upliftment of the lower classes. Even social reforms will not be effective if people are not educated enough to appreciate the results.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PLAN:

When Swamiji returned to India in 1897 after the first phase of his work abroad, he had some definite plans for serving the poor. On the way to Calcutta, he delivered a speech at Madras where he explained his plan of campaign. He said:

'... my plan is to start institutions in India, to train our young men as preachers of the truths of our scriptures in India and outside India'.

In his plan he gave top priority to the diffusion of spiritual as well as secular knowledge. Soon after reaching Calcutta he founded the Ramakrishna Mission and laiddown its objectives which included the establishment and management of educational institutions at different places where education was to be imparted according to his ideals. That was in May 1897, and in the meantime a century has passed by. Swamiji has given a remarkable definition of education. He says, 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' He stated that all knowledge, spiritual and secular, is stored in the human mind, just as a huge banyan tree lies within a tiny seed. The function of the teacher is only to help that seed sprout and grow by offering suggestions. The relation between the teacher and the taught is therefore of utmost importance. There should be perfect understanding and mutual sympathy between them. In pursuance of its objectives, Ramakrishna Mission, over past one hundred years, has established a number of schools, colleges, and other educational institutions all over the country and has been trying its best to spread education among the people. The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda envisages an ideal blending of the heart and the intellect. Besides, faith, sympathy, and mutual respect between the learner, the guardian, and the teacher are also carefully developed in all the educational institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission. In Vedic times, students were taught to see their parents, teachers, and guests as God. Swamiji went further and asked all to look at the poor and illiterate as God. In his view, those educated men and women are traitors who do not try to uplift the poor and backward people. Assimilation of five constructive and noble ideas, according to Swami Vivekananda, is more useful than getting by heart a whole library.

MAN MAKING EDUCATION

The Ramakrishna Mission therefore aims at man-making and character-building education. Swamiji reminded the educationists of the country again and again that religion should be the core of our education system as it helps one to attain real manhood. Swami Premeshananda, an ideal and experienced teacher in his pre-monastic life, advised the students of the Ramakrishna Mission schools to this effect. A day will come when your university education will came to an end. Then you will have to take up various responsible duties. Now you are not like toys in the hands of foreigners; now you are the free citizens of independent India. From now onward you will have to keep vigilance towards the welfare of i) your own self, ii) India and iii) and the whole of humanity.

You should learn those things which will make your life happy in all respects. That which does not turn the joy of early life into the sorrow of youth, the merriment of youth, into the sorrow of middle-age, and the happiness of the middle-age into the miseries of old age is the right type of learning. Education which makes the whole society happy with the happiness of the individual and which produces a society which is constrained and fair in its relation with other societies is called the right type of education. Whatsoever removes misery and increases happiness and makes the happiness stable is real education.

HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT

But this presents only a part of the picture. The educational programme of the Mission envisages a harmonious development of head, heart, and hand based on a sound moral and religious background. The students are helped to cultivate a deep religious attitude and genuine respect for the glorious traditions and culture of their country. Broadly speaking, it is the man-making and character-building education which the students receive at various Mission institutions, a kind of education which was stressed by Swami Vivekananda.

The religion to which the learners or inmates are exposed and which they are inspired to follow is the universal religion of which Sri Ramakrishna was the living embodiment and Swami Vivekananda was the one to see God in every being. In addition to the prescribed text books, the students are required to read books on ancient Indian history and culture. In order to promote the development of

an integrated personality, facilities for sports and games and various extra-curricular activities are offered by all the centers of the Mission. Performances of dramas, debate, recitations, drawing, painting, modeling, music, sky-searching, horticulture, etc. form an essential part of the educational programme. Annual sports events and competitions are awarded. As a result, students of the Mission institutions have also made their marks in many of these fields. Besides, every institution from nursery schools to the Degree College level publishes a magazine periodically with contributions mainly from the students. This greatly helps the students to cultivate writing skills and develop their literary potential.

Training in handicrafts and different vocational trades has been introduced in some of the centres. Such training has helped many to earn a livelihood. Moreover the students regularly participate in exhibitions of handicrafts, science projects, etc. which the students themselves organize under the direct supervision of teachers. Religious festivals and birthdays of great men and saints are also reverently observed at Mission institutions with students taking an active part. Extensive library facilities are made available in most of the centres and students are encouraged to develop an interest in general reading. Moreover, pictures of saints and other great men and women of all centuries are displayed in classrooms, shrines and other places. Students are also urged to acquire knowledge about the lives and activities of these outstanding people.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Promotion of national integration and communal harmony plays a prominent role in all programmes and activities of the students who represent different castes and religions. Consequently, they learn the art of loving each other, and the art of living and working together. They also learn to honor our country as their own mother. All efforts are made to ensure that they are free of all evil influences such as unsympathetic caste distinctions, religious intolerance and bigotry. In short, the aim of the Mission is to bring up our youths as ideal citizens on the model laid down by Swami Vivekananda.

Admittedly, the Mission cannot cater to the needs of the whole country in matters of education. However, in spite of various hindrances, the Mission institutions

have been trying their best to serve nation in field of education. Taken together they have become a model which may be followed by people and different organizations which are dedicated to raising Mother India from its present predicament.

VARIETY OF INSTITUTIONS

Since its establishment in 1897, the Mission has been running thousands of institutions for formal and non-formal education. These include orphanages, students' homes, a Blind Boys Academy, non-formal and adult education centres, self-employment training centres, Swajaj Sevak Training centres, agricultural research institutes, cattle farming institutes, technical schools, polytechnics, community polytechnics, computer training centres, language schools, libraries, librarianship training centres, hospitals and institutes for training nurses, teachers' training institutes, post-graduate medical research institutes, Veda Vidyalaya, and countless formal schools and colleges. The Mission also runs schools and hostels for tribal boys and girls in Arunachal, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa and other remote parts of the country.

Table-1 (Educational Institutions under Ramakrishna Mission)

Sl. No.	**Educational Institutions under the Ramakrishna Mission in India as per the General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission publish on April 2013**	**Total No.**
1.	University	1
2.	Colleges	15
3.	Schools (H.S.)	26
4.	Secondary Schools	40
5.	Junior High Schools	42
6.	Primary Schools	48
7.	Nursery / Kindergarten Schools	220
8.	Teachers' Training Institution	6
9.	Institute for the Study of the Vedas	1
10.	Institute for the Study of the Sanskrit	7

11.	Schools of Language	3
12.	Libraries	170
13.	Exhibitions, Museums and Art Galleries	17

These institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission are all recognized by the concerned authorities such as Boards, University or the relevant government departments. The students are taught the course of students as prescribed by such authorities with particular care. This is evident from the brilliant performance of the students at different public examinations.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The educational system that was introduced into India after the conquest of the country by the British was embedding of the English educational system prevailing at that time in England. The embedding did not thrive well on the Indian soil because it lacked the aim and objective, which had fertilized it in its native land. Lord Macaulay wrote the Minutes, which formed the basis of official educational policy of the British Government in India. He clearly stated that the government must "At present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and color but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect". The Mudaliar Commission refers to this scheme as follows: "The education imparted in these schools became a passport for entrance into Government services. This was mainly due to the Proclamation issued by Lord Hardinge in 1844 that for service in public offices preference should be given to those who were educated in English Schools". Now, an education that has such limited objectives and purely utilitarian aim is sure to sure to stultify itself. This is what has actually happened since English education was introduced in India in the year 1835. Though Commissions and Committees looked into the defects of the system from time to time, the picture has remained very nearly the same. According to the Mudaliar Commission, the following are the basic shortcomings and defects of the present Secondary Schools, which are also valid for other educational institutions:

•The education given in our school is isolated from life.

•It is narrow and one-sided and fails to train the whole and integrated personality of the student.

•Education was given until recently in English, a foreign language. If a student did not fare well in English he could neither pass the school final examination nor find any post in government service. The other subjects, who were psychologically and socially important or congenial, were not given greater attention.

•The methods of teaching generally practiced failed to develop in the student either independence of tough or initiative in action. It is a matter of complaint that lessons are imparted in mechanical way giving information, which is reluctantly memorized by the students.

•The increase in the size of classes has considerably reduced personal contact between teachers and pupils. And the training of character and inculcation of proper discipline have been seriously undermined.

•The dead weight of the examination has tended to curb the teachers' initiative, to stereotype the curriculum, to promote mechanical and lifeless methods of teaching, to discourage all spirit of experimentation and to place the stress on wrong or unimportant things in education. Such is the dismal picture of our educational system. All the committees and commissions appointed even after the achievement of independence have failed to brighten up the situation, because the reforms suggested by them have been superficial and piecemeal. What is needed is a restatement of the aims ideals of education, and a radical change of the approach to the problem. In the context of these considerations we want to invoke the great personality of Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji was not merely a spiritual teacher and his vast intellect could scan all our national problems and throw on them the floodlight of his radiant mind, which could dispel darkness of ignorance underlying them. Studying the problems of Indian national life, he saw the depth of ignorance that the people of India were steeped in. He could easily make out that the main reason for our degradation was lack of quality education. He wrote: "Education, education and education alone! Traveling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education

was the answer I got". But Swami Vivekananda was conscious of the defects of prevailing system of Education. Though Swamiji was never mainly concerned with pedagogy as such, education as a national problem always engaged his thought. His observations on education are so revealing that Sister Nivedita remarks: "What regard to the details of his educational suggestions, their pedagogic soundness had always been startling to me". But one would not be very much startled if one remembers the fact that Swamiji at the end of his spiritual quest had found the key to life. This had made him a spiritual teacher of humanity. No door of human life remained closed or bared to him. He was the Yugacarya, the teacher of the new era. So he could not only find out the defects of the educational system in vogue, but also clearly enunciate and formulate a new system a system that might solve the educational problems of India and of the whole world. Keeping this end in view, the centers of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission have been running a number of institutions throughout the country solely or partly devoted to education.

People all over the world are becoming deeply concerned about the 'Global disaster' of our time. They are making all out efforts to create awareness of the nature and seriousness of this disaster which may, in the very near future, lead to the total destruction, not only of human civilization but also of human existence. Why do they apprehend such a disaster? Some of the very prominent symptoms of the disaster are:

•Modern warfare with extensive use of nuclear weapons.

•Growth of violence and terrorism in almost all parts of the globe.

•Accumulation of power and excessive wealth in the hands of a limited few.

•Environmental pollution to an alarming degree.

•Consumerism devoid of any concern about the needs of others and about the limited resources of the earth.

•The ugly contrast that is visible everywhere between affluence and poverty.

•Frustration, depression, insecurity, loneliness, aimlessness of life and erosion of values that cause a severe psychological break down, often leading to alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide. What then, is the future of humanity?

It has been observed and pointed out by many thinkers that a major cause of this disaster is the unbalanced growth of modern science and technology that has placed tremendous power in human hands to radically change the material conditions of life while very little effort has been made to bring about corresponding changes in human attitudes so that the newly acquired prosperity may be used for the well-being of humanity. On the contrary, technological advancement has not only weakened the roots of traditional morality but has caused the erosion of the older value system and thus, has unbridled the egoistic impulses of human beings. In the hierarchy of the value system, material and political values occupy the top position whereas moral, aesthetic and religious values come way down at the bottom. Intellectual values are now being considered only as instrumental values. Thinkers point out the fault in the modern education system, which has lost sight of the need for the totality of educational experiences that lead to the balanced development of personality. More importance is now being given to the cognitive domain than to the non-cognitive domain of education. The focus is more on the development of individual excellence in the areas of knowledge and skill to meet the practical needs of life. More emphasis is laid on competition, material prosperity and poser; and less on cooperative work, compassionate outlook, peace and tranquility, aesthetic detachment, moralachievement and spirituality. At best, such education can develop individual andgroup efficiency in some areas of life that are related to economic development; but it cannot take a man on to the path of self-actualization, the most important goal of human life.

The discerning human beings are baffled with the alarming rate with which values and value systems are getting eroded the world over. The basic question that lingers in the minds of a common man is that "Since money is the deciding factor, should we really value 'Values'?" Our conscience tells us that the answer is 'NO'. It can't buy peace, strength of mind and contentment. It appeared so because of our upbringing and the environment which we live. Also, because of the corporate culture influencing 'General Education' which in turn influences the functioning of schools, colleges and universities. Their curricula are on

par with the market requirement and the performance of the student is restricted to harness narrow vocational ends and do not focus in the direction of pursuing knowledge for its own sake. What happens to us without our knowledge is that, money has attacked the most vulnerable point of our character, i.e., it has crushed thequalms of our conscience.

Even after more than 60 years of independence many children are school dropouts. Majority of the people in this country are deprived of basic education. It is unfortunate that even today few men enjoy the fruits of the efforts of other people. The youth feel both anger and contempt for the hordes of politicians and bureaucrats who are responsible for bringing the nation to a state of degradation. They also wonder why the good, honest, capable, cultured people of this country have done so little to stem the rot, why they contented themselves with throwing up their hands in despair and pleading helplessness. Brain drain, a factor which forces an individual to move out of the country for better prospects, due to intolerance and other issues.

Therefore there is an urgent need to study and to investigate the importance of values in our daily lives. Whether they are a means to liberation. Does it give us freedom to explore, to investigate, to accept truth even when it goes against one's earlier notions and beliefs. By practicing values are we liberated from the numerous prejudices based on gender, religion, region, language and superstitious beliefs and does it lead us towards an enlightened and humane society? Any great work starts from a state of Sensitivity. Unless we make persistent efforts by pledging to work with a renewed zeal and strength, the greatness of a particular work looses its sensitivity. Imparting value education is a great responsibility. Value orientation in education should become a highly cherished and extolled ideal of Educational Institutions. Swami Vivekananda single-handedly awoke India from deep slumber more than 100 years ago. He said, "Education is the panacea of all evils". Ramakrishna Math and Mission are shouldering this social responsibility of imparting value education in a silent way in a well-coordinated effort irrespective of any superficial consideration. Since its inception, it has functioned well and recently bloomed into a full-fledged deemed University in 2005 called the "Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University".

"We want quality, not quantity" — said Swami Vivekananda. The new outlook of education also calls for a quality revolution in its entire system all around the world. In this respect, a shift from quantity to quality in terms of quality consciousness and continuous improvement play key role in determining the future perspectives in education. The goal now is to seek for a *continuous improvement paradigm*- that incorporates ever new ideas and principles accepting the widest possible variety rather than a stereotyped process of finding out the best. The principle of Total Quality Management asks for a continuous quality up-gradation, as there is nothing called *the ultimate quality.*

An institution in this respect has a bigger role to play. It must think that the demand for quality improvement is not a one-day affair and it needs a continuous striving for growth and modification of the system. Hence it should mend gaieties as per the demand of the situation and should always seek greater and long term benefit-not of a personal and ephemeral one.

Same is the true for an individual student or the community also. The outcome of education should be the modification of behaviour. The directives towards 'world citizenship' and a good world 'to live together' is what the modern education looks for.

But 'to be' needs character formation and if implies to know both the inner nature and the outer nature of one's being. Lots of research studies have been carried out on Philosophy of Education. Some of the works also have been carried out on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. But hardly any work has been taken up to look into the education organized by the Ramakrishna Mission which persuaded the present researcher to raise certain issues such as whether Ramakrishna Mission offer education as it is prescribed by and prevalent in the general system and style of education in the country or there are some significant programmes as offered by the Mission.

The present study implies the study 'education in Ramakrishna Mission' in the light of Swami Vivekananda dreamt of education. So we anticipate that the findings will cast rays on knowing the procedure of acquiring knowledge in the Vivekananda way of thinking, the nature of human being, the nature of the knowledge, the belief that generate from the analysis of the knowledge and the knower, the supremacy of the

subjectivity of knowledge, the way out to manifest the inner perfection, the role of the process and procedure of acquiring knowledge in this context and how it can enrich the disciplines of education, the clear understanding to one's own nature and others' to bring about change in behaviour within the student and the teacher, mutual respect in the academic arena, and after all to pursue for whatever is good for the world and what role can education play to realize this goal in respect of the institutions of the Ramakrishna Mission.

To be more exact the following questions may be raised to study deeply the education practised by the Mission:

- Why the Ramakrishna Mission had taken up the endeavor of spreading up of Education.
- When actually the Ramakrishna Mission had taken up the education in the fold of the Mission.
- What are the purposes of running the educational institution for the masses?
- How far it is helping the Mission to achieve its objectives.
- Can an alternative model be evolved on the basis of the practices made by the Mission?
- How spiritual training are imparted.
- What are the curriculum (Spiritual) followed by the Mission?

To find out the answers of the above issues of questions the present study entitled **'Education in Ramakrishna Mission: A Critical Study'** has been designed with the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

(1) To study the growth & development of education in Ramakrishna Mission (Formal education).
(2) To study the education evolved in Ramakrishna Mission for strengthening the human values (spiritual education).
(3) Examine the contribution of Ramakrishna Mission for liberal education.
(4) To study the relevance of the education evolved by Ramakrishna Mission to the Indian Society.
(5) To propose an alternative model of education.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1. The study would be delimited to the field of education.
2. Within the field of education the study would be delimited to the field of educational activities of the Ramakrishna Mission.
3. The study would be delimited to the relevance of education evolved by Ramakrishna Mission to the Indian Society.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

Ramakrishna Mission: Ramakrishna Mission is an Indian spiritual as well as religious organization which forms the core of a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna Movement or the Vedanta Movement. The mission is a philanthropic, volunteer organisation founded by Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple Swami Vivekananda on 1 May 1897. The mission conducts extensive work in health care, disaster relief, rural management, tribal welfare, elementary and higher education and culture. It uses the combined efforts of hundreds of ordered monks and thousands of householder disciples. The mission bases its work on the principles of karma yoga.

The Mission, which is headquartered near Kolkata at Belur Math in Howrah, West Bengal, subscribes to the ancient Hindu philosophy of Vedanta. It is affiliated with the monastic organisation Ramakrishna Math, with whom it shares members.

The Mission, founded by Vivekananda in 1897 as an humanitarian organisation carries out medical, relief and educational programs. The Mission acquired a legal status when it was registered in 1909 under Act XXI of 1860. Its management is vested in a Governing Body. Though the Mission with its branches is a distinct legal entity, it is closely related to the Math. The elected trustees of the Math also serve as Mission's Governing Body.

The aims and ideals of the Mission are purely spiritual and humanitarian and has no connection with politics. Vivekananda proclaimed "Renunciation and service" as the twofold national ideals of modern India and the work of the mission strives to practice and preach these ideals. The service activities are based on the message of "Jiva is

Shiva" from Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's message of "Daridra Narayana" to indicate that service to poor is service to God. The Principles of Upanishads and Yoga in Bhagavad Gita reinterpreted in the light of Ramakrishna's Life and Teachings is the main source of inspiration for the Mission. The service activities are rendered looking upon all as veritable manifestation of the Divine. The Motto of the organisation is *Atmano Mokshartham Jagad-hitaya Cha* (translated from Sanskrit आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम् जगद्धिताय च) means *for one's own salvation, and for the good of the world*.